

5 TOP GETAWAYS FOR \$150 A DAY P. 20

ULTIMATE  
BAHAMAS  
GUIDE

Go Beyond Nassau  
P. 36

# Islands®

*Enthusiast Travel Since 1981*

WE RATE THE BEST

## CARIBBEAN BEACHES

FOR SAND CASTLES • TOE TEMPTATIONS  
BEING MAROONED

P. 44

The  
Surprising  
Origins of  
Sand  
P. 48



JAMAICA • ANTIGUA • SAINT LUCIA • BAHAMAS • GRENADA • BARBADOS



**Always on the  
leading edge of innovation.**

**Sandals® Resorts is the leader  
in all-inclusives.  
Always has been. Always will be.**

***Sandals***®

**MORE QUALITY INCLUSIONS THAN  
ANY OTHER RESORTS ON THE PLANET**

1-800-SANDALS • [sandals.com](http://sandals.com)  
OR CALL YOUR TRAVEL AGENT



# The *Cayman* Islands



## AN EPICUREAN EXPERIENCE

Whether you crave local fare or gourmet flair, paradise is served at more than 200 restaurants across this destination. A marquee culinary event, Cayman Cookout, draws noted chefs such as Eric Ripert, Anthony Bourdain, and José Andrés. With proprietor chefs that have won recognition from the James Beard Foundation and restaurateurs with Wine Spectator List awards, it's easy to taste why the Cayman Islands is touted as the Culinary Capital of the Caribbean.



For more information and to book,  
visit [www.caymanislands.ky](http://www.caymanislands.ky).

## SUMMER ONLY IN CAYMAN

Why go to the beach for the day when you can enjoy an entire stay in the Caribbean at an incredible value? During Summer Only in Cayman, visitors to the Cayman Islands will enjoy a 5th night free with any 4-night booking at a range of resorts, boutique hotels, and cosy dive lodges.

Families can also keep the kids entertained by using the program's "Only in Cayman Savings Card" which grants island-wide deals on everything from private charters to conch fritters. For those looking to save on an getaway well-spent, Summer Only in Cayman keenly promises both. Book now until June 1, 2015 to travel May 1 – August 31, 2015.



## UNDERWATER WONDERS

The moment a spotted eagle ray darts from one side of your scuba mask to the underside of a reef, lush with swaying sea fans and colourful sponges, you'll realize that diving in the Cayman Islands is truly an epic experience. Boasting over 365 unique sites—that's a year's worth of dives—enthusiasts never tire of these crystal clear waters. What's more, a government focus on conservation ensures that denizens of the deep will be here year after year.





WHEREVER YOU FIND YOUR SMILE, YOU'LL FIND OURS.  
**THAT'S CAYMANKIND.**



A WORLD AWAY JUST ONE HOUR FROM MIAMI.  
[www.caymanislands.ky](http://www.caymanislands.ky)



# CONTENTS

## CAREER MOVE P. 47

Making sand castles for a living seems far-fetched. Selling a sand castle for \$100K... well, Mark Mason has done both.

## CHEAP THRILLS P. 20

What you spend while visiting the Philippines is surprising. So is the airfare that gets you there. Thank you, Nathan Myers.

## BEST BEACHES P. 44

Why are our top beaches unique? Staffer Zach Stovall: His toes have touched almost every beach in the Caribbean. The jerk.

## IF FOUND ... P. 18

It's white, and it has four propellers and a GoPro camera underneath. We imagine that it's smiling ...

## RICE PADDY P. 58

Bali rice terraces are exquisite. After being knee deep in a Bali rice terrace the term "exquisite" still applies, but for very different reasons.



## 16

### GET HERE

It's worth a trip to Taiwan just to cross this **crazy bridge**. Where to seize an escape for **\$150 a day** or less. Best place for a spontaneous splurge: **Portugal**.

## 27

### LIFE HERE

While our kids ride bikes, look what they do in **Malaysia**. Why one of our writers literally went **nuts in Yap**. Famed **Kauai** family keeps it simple (surfing, God and no AC).

## 36

### IT'S THE BAHAMAS

A mountain. A beach that changes every hour. A wild island three times the size of Maui. Jad Davenport's discoveries go on and on.



## 22

## 44

### CARIBBEAN'S BEST BEACHES

Our favorites versus yours. Plus: one beach-lover's dream job; where sand comes from; the hardest beach to access.

## 52

### NEVIS: INSIDE OUT

Travelers like David Lansing arrive here and make an immediate beeline ... away from the beach. But why?

## 58

### LIFE IN THE RICE

Photographer Zach Stovall came to shoot Bali's beautiful rice terraces. Then he got an eyeeful of something better.

## 67

### HOW TO ...

Catch a fish using whatever is in the recycle bin in **Brazil**. Move to an island of whales and tattletales (and maybe even **open a bike shop**).



## 39



## EDDY PATRICELLI

Islands' brand director dreads selfies, but likes dishing — especially about this issue you're holding.

ON THE COVER Near Eagle Beach, Aruba. It's on your "best" list (page 47), but not ours. Photo by Matt Dutile.

ISLANDS.COM



**BVITOURISM.COM 1-800-835-8530**

The best-kept secrets are the ones we keep to ourselves. They're the moments that bring a knowing grin and sparkle to our eye. The secrets hidden among the British Virgin Islands are some of nature's best. Where every breeze offers a liberating aura of untucked luxury. And her 60 islands conceal majestic caves, secluded beaches, lush mountain trails, and fabled shipwrecks. These are everlasting moments. The ones you keep to yourself.



# I THINK I'LL KEEP THIS TO MYSELF



Tortola | Virgin Gorda | Jost Van Dyke | Anegada | Cooper Island | Guana Island | Little Thatch | Necker Island | Norman Island | Peter Island | Saba Rock | Scrub Island



*Escape* to Aruba's coveted Eagle Beach — wide, soft and crowd-free — at Blue Residences. This new, luxury condominium resort offers the ultimate island beach resort experience. Spacious ocean-view apartment suites feature fully equipped kitchens, and some with a Jacuzzi on your private terrace.

Amenities include an infinity pool, beach access, minimart, spa and a fitness center. Spectacular views from the Frangipani Bar & Terrace and Mirador Deck — serving breakfast, lunch and your favorite cocktails. The Kitchen Table by White presents an 8-course culinary journey as the ultimate dining experience. The perfect setting for your next family vacation.

# Islands®

BRAND DIRECTOR **Eddy Patricelli**  
Eddy.Patricelli@bonniercorp.com

GROUP PUBLISHER **Laura Walker**  
Laura.Walker@bonniercorp.com

EXECUTIVE EDITOR **Robert Stephens**  
Robert.Stephens@bonniercorp.com

#### EDITORIAL

MANAGING EDITOR **Audrey St. Clair**  
DIGITAL CONTENT DIRECTOR **Steve Spears**  
DIGITAL EDITOR **Cami Webb**  
COPY EDITOR **Kathleen M. Kiely**  
INTERN **Julia Clancy**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS & PHOTOGRAPHERS **Jad Davenport, Jen Judge, David Lansing, Matthew Miller, Brooke Morton, Nathan Myers, Edward Readicker-Henderson, Sarah Sekula**

#### ART

ART DIRECTOR **Jennifer Pileggi**  
PHOTOGRAPHY DIRECTOR **Lori Barbely**  
SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS **Zach Stovall, Jon Whittle**

#### ADVERTISING

CARIBBEAN/MEXICO/EUROPE **Paula Iwanski, Advertising Director, 407-571-4605; paula.iwanski@bonniercorp.com**  
UNITED STATES **Kelly Freygang, 407-571-4743; kelly.freygang@bonniercorp.com**  
CARIBBEAN **Julie Kittredge, 813-877-6959; julie.kittredge@bonniercorp.com**  
HAWAII **Debbie Anderson, 808-739-2200; debbieanderson@dmhawaii.com**  
HOTELS/VACATION RENTALS **Jacki Kendall, 407-571-4542; jacki.kendall@bonniercorp.com**  
SENIOR ONLINE PRODUCER **Jeff Williams, 407-571-4787; jeffrey.williams@bonniercorp.com**  
SALES COORDINATOR **Tracey Voorhees, 407-571-4986; tracey.voorhees@bonniercorp.com**

VP, DIRECTOR OF BRAND STRATEGIES **Matt Hickman**  
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR **Shawn Bean**  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR **David Weaver**  
CONSUMER MARKETING DIRECTOR **Leigh Bingham**  
GROUP MARKETING DIRECTOR **Haley Bischof**  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR **Jackie D'Antonio**  
CONTENT SOLUTIONS MANAGER **Lindsay Gigler**  
PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER **Robyn Sheckler**  
MARKETING MANAGERS **Oriana Avila, Mary Hannah Hardcastle**

CORPORATE PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Jeff Cassell**  
GROUP PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Michelle Doster**  
SENIOR PRODUCTION MANAGER **Alison Klein**  
DESIGN SERVICES DIRECTOR **Suzanne Oberholtzer**  
GRAPHIC ARTISTS **Julia Arana, Jennifer Remias**  
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR **Sheri Bass**

ISLANDS IS A DIVISION OF

**BONNIER**

<b>Tomas Franzén</b>	Chairman
<b>Dave Freygang</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Eric Zinzenko</b>	Executive Vice President
<b>David Ritchie</b>	Chief Content Officer
<b>Todd DeBoer</b>	Chief Financial Officer
<b>Lisa Earlywine</b>	Chief Operating Officer
<b>Elizabeth Burnham Murphy</b>	Chief Marketing Officer
<b>Sean Holzman</b>	Chief Digital Revenue Officer
<b>John Graney</b>	Vice President, Integrated Sales
<b>John Reese</b>	Vice President, Consumer Marketing
<b>Jennifer Anderson</b>	Vice President, Digital Audience Development
<b>David Butler</b>	Vice President, Digital Operations
<b>Perri Dorset</b>	Vice President, Public Relations
<b>Jeremy Thompson</b>	General Counsel

BUSINESS AND EDITORIAL OFFICES 460 N. Orlando Ave., Suite 200, Winter Park, FL 32789



This product is from  
sustainably managed forests  
and controlled sources.



Lithography RR Donnelley  
PRINTED IN USA

For content reprints, reuse and permissions, e-mail reprints@bonniercorp.com.

Occasionally, we make portions of our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we think may be of interest to you. If you do not want to receive these offers, please advise us at 800-250-1523. We cannot be responsible for the care or return of unsolicited materials.

FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SUBSCRIPTION QUESTIONS, such as renewals, address changes, e-mail preferences, billing and account status, go to: islands.com/cs. You can also e-mail ISMcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com, in the U.S., call toll-free 800-250-1523, outside the U.S., call 515-237-3697, or write to Islands, P.O. Box 6364, Harlan, IA 51593.

800-728-4910  
www.bluearuba.com



a  **tripadvisor** traveler review

“WOW...”



Kimberly M. Virginia

### Cueva Ventana, Arecibo

I'd heard about this place and told myself that I'd go during my next trip to PR. I made that trip a reality and am SO glad I did. It is absolutely AMAZING! The photos don't do it justice...it's a must-see in person!

*Cueva Ventana is more than a unique natural cave spectacle. It's a five star world class attraction. Live your own five star vacation story.*



Watch actual reviews come to life at  
**SEEPUERTORICO.COM**



FOR MORE INFORMATION 1-800-866-7827



/seepuertorico



@PRTourismCo

*Puerto Rico* ★  
THE ALL STAR ISLAND



# ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

Stunning Resorts,  
Unforgettable  
Destination



**Amazing Summer Specials for a Limited Time**

(855) 397-4741 | [eliteislandresorts.com/islands](http://eliteislandresorts.com/islands) or Call Your Favorite Travel Professional



COUPLES • FAMILIES • FRIENDS  
WELCOMED WARMLY



### ANTIGUA'S MOST FAMOUS ADDRESS

A luxurious all-inclusive resort and spa set on a private 100-acre peninsula with two white-sand beaches, choice dining, and activities for all.



St. James's Club  
ANTIGUA



THE VERANDAH  
RESORT & SPA • ANTIGUA

### ANTIGUA'S ALL-INCLUSIVE ALL SUITE RESORT

An eco-friendly resort with captivating views and two fabulous beaches on a protective cove of crystal clear turquoise waters.

Elite Island Resorts  
CARIBBEAN



# FIND YOUR PUERTO RICO



TAKE OUR QUIZ TO DISCOVER WHICH  
ESCAPE SUITS YOUR TRAVEL STYLE BEST



## WHAT'S YOUR IDEAL FOOTWEAR?

- A** Hiking Shoes / Sneakers
- B** Flip Flops
- C** High Heels / Wing Tips



## WHAT'S YOUR DRINK OF CHOICE?

- A** Beer
- B** Frozen Drink
- C** Champagne



## WHICH ACTIVITY SAYS "DREAM VACAY" TO YOU?

- A** Snorkeling / Biking
- B** Sunbathing
- C** Art Museum / Sightseeing

## WHICH VIEW DO YOU WANT TO SEE FROM YOUR HOTEL ROOM?

- A** Nature / Mountains
- B** Sand / Ocean
- C** Cityscape





# FIND YOUR PUERTO RICO

SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



**WHERE TO PLAY** With its rainforests, dry forests, mountains, bioluminescent bays, caves and canyons, Puerto Rico offers a wealth of natural attractions to explore throughout the island. From San Juan, many natural attractions can be experienced as day trips. El Yunque National Forest, home to Puerto Rican parrots and coqui tree frogs, is found on the island's northwest tip. Tour operators and trail guides cater to travelers who want to take a short walk to waterfalls, and to those who seek longer hikes and overnight camping trips. In the southern region, there's a bay in the town of La Parguera where, on nights with no moon, it's dark enough to witness bioluminescent clouds of neon light in the water, caused by tiny organisms that glow when disturbed.



**WHERE TO STAY** Find **Caribe Hilton** in San Juan near Old San Juan and the cruise piers, along a stretch of golden sand protected

by a small jetty. The place where the Piña Colada was invented 65 years ago. At sunset, stop by Caribar and taste the tantalizing cocktails and light bites prepared by Chef Andres Sepulveda, while enjoying tropical breezes. With cabana-style beds, a hammock garden, and several pools plus a fitness center overlooking the water, it's an ideal base to return to after a day of adventure. From the hotel, you can arrange day trips and hikes to El Yunque, walks in Guanica's dry forest, and kayak excursions to the Bioluminescent Bay in Fajardo.



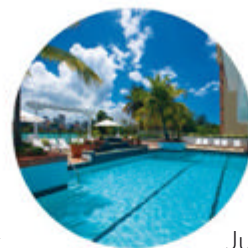
**WHERE TO PLAY** Every coast of Puerto Rico has gorgeous beaches, but not all are created equal. The West Coast is the island's surf destination, known mainly for spots like Aguadilla and Rincon. In San Juan, the waters are much calmer thanks to its network of bays and coves. Moreover, beaches in the capital merge inspired, natural settings with amenities like seaside bars and water sports, with quick access to the city's finest shopping.

**WHERE TO STAY** The peninsula of El Condado separates the Atlantic Ocean from a sheltered bay. Nestled on the

Condado Lagoon, **The Condado Plaza Hilton** enjoys quiet, calm waters, making it an ideal choice for water sports. If you love to be active, the resort offers stand-up paddleboards, kayaks, snorkel gear to explore the taino-themed underwater reef, and pedal boats. At this hotel, you'll also experience the island's only saltwater pool, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, as well as additional stores and restaurants that are easily accessible by foot.



**WHERE TO PLAY** Downtown Old San Juan is among the Caribbean's most international cities. Within a 15-block radius of its high-energy center, you'll find Spanish, Tunisian, Turkish, Italian, Argentine, and of course, Puerto Rican cuisine. Places like Dragonfly, an Asian fusion hotspot known for duck nachos with wasabi cream, gather their biggest crowds after 9 p.m. Post meal, head to a nightclub to dance. If you're not in the mood to kick up your heels, at least stroll the streets to sample the live music. And for local color, no dive bar in Old Town is more fun than El Batey on Calle de Cristo. Graffiti covers the walls, drinks are cheap, and the locals are welcoming.



**WHERE TO STAY** From a few major properties, it's a five-minute cab ride to Old San Juan. Head into the

historic city to dine and get your groove on — then return to your hotel's onsite restaurants, bars and nightclubs. Then, when it's last call, just ride the elevator up to bed. The **El San Juan Resort & Casino, A Hilton Hotel** offers the best of both worlds. It's set on Isla Verde Beach, but the overall vibe is urban and upbeat. Several rooms were recently remodeled, and the main tower guest rooms feature cityscape views. But you haven't come simply to relax in your room. The casino keeps the excitement high with blackjack, craps, roulette and slots. The Edouard de Paris Day Spa offers reflexol-



ogy, body-polish treatments, and more. Plus, the resort itself is a nightlife destination with live music and salsa dancing in the lobby, and 13 bars and lounges, including Club BRAVA with table service in its Ultra Lounge.

**Visit us on Facebook**  
to enter to win a Puerto Rico Getaway. Facebook.com/islandsmag



*Royal West Indies Resort*  
• Grace Bay • Turks and Caicos Islands •



All suite, ocean front Royal West Indies Resort is nestled on beautiful Grace Bay beach. This amazing resort offers studio, 1 & 2 bedroom suites. With exciting activities and sights nearby to enjoy it's the perfect place for a wonderful vacation!

Welcome to Royal West Indies Resort.

reservations@  
royalwestindies.com  
1-800-332-4203  
www.royalwestindies.com

## Luxury. Romance. Adventure.

Plan your 2015 cruise with *Islands'* Best Cruises Travel Guide.

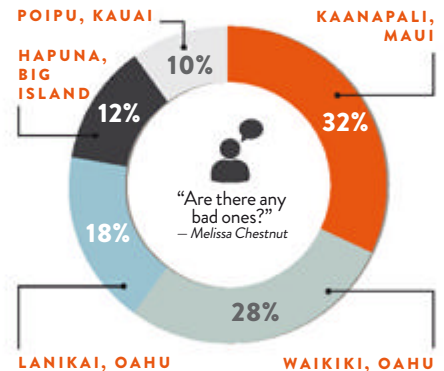


islands.com/bestcruises

## ISLANDS NOW



What's your favorite  
Hawaiian beach?



► I love Kaanapali, but really I'm not picky. Going to Kauai next month and looking forward to seeing the beaches there and how they differ from Maui's.  
— Margo Renee Rodewald

► Sunrise at Hapuna Beach is my favorite alone time. — Chris Heard

► Poipu in Kauai for that Old Hawaii feel.  
— Naomi Gutierrez Wadsack

► It's tough to beat the old standby: Waikiki Beach. — Monica Assemani

► Today I'd say Napili Bay beach on Maui. Tomorrow it might be Lanikai on Oahu.  
— Melanie Hibbs

► Moloaa in Kauai, for peace and seclusion. — Teri Haymore-Flud

► Waianapanapa Beach on Maui. It's spiritual; calm and happiness seem to vacation there. — Kathryn L. Nesbeth Black

► The end of the road: Ke'e beach on Kauai. — Jeff Lowrance

GIVE BACK

# ONE

CHILDREN'S BOOK. INSCRIBE IT WITH  
A NOTE TO A CHILD IN ROATAN, AND  
HELP INSPIRE A LOVE OF READING.

PIERROATAN.ORG





ESCAPE INTO LUXURY.

*Unlimited-Luxury®  
Exclusive Meets Inclusive:*

LUXURIOUS OCEANFRONT  
SUITES WITH  
PRIVATE TERRACES

PREFERRED CLUB FOR  
EXCLUSIVE UPGRADES

24-HOUR ROOM SERVICE

LIMITLESS GOURMET  
DINING, SNACKS &  
TOP-SHELF SPIRITS

SIP, SAVOR & SEE  
MULTI-RESORT DINING

UNLIMITED CONNECTIVITY:  
FREE WIFI AND CALLING TO  
THE U.S. & CANADA

COMPLIMENTARY  
GREENS FEES

LIVE SHOWS NIGHTLY

WORLD CLASS SPAS  
*Additional fees apply*

At Secrets Resorts & Spas, *Unlimited-Luxury®* lets you enjoy as much of everything as you wish without ever having to think about a tab, gratuities or even dining reservations. Providing infinite pleasure is our secret. How you enjoy it, is *yours*.

*Visit [SecretsResorts.com](http://SecretsResorts.com) for more details.*



EXPERIENCE *UNLIMITED-LUXURY®* FOR ALL-ADULT ROMANCE IN **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:** PUNTA CANA | **JAMAICA:** MONTEGO BAY  
**MEXICO:** AKUMAL (NOV 2015) • CANCUN • COZUMEL • HUATULCO • LOS CABOS • PLAYA MUJERES • PUERTO VALLARTA • RIVIERA CANCUN

THE *amresorjs*® COLLECTION

ZOETRY  
RESORTS & SPA RESORTS

SECRETS  
Resorts & Spas

breathless  
RESORTS & SPAS

DREAMS  
Resorts & Spas

now  
RESORTS & SPAS

SUNSCAPE  
RESORTS & SPA

©2015



# GET HERE

XAVIER ARNAU SERRAT/GETTY IMAGES







PHOTO BY XAVIER AMAU SERRAT

## DRAGON TRAIL

### IF YOU'RE CURIOUS

This is the Sansiantai Dragon Bridge of Taiwan. Built in 1987, the bridge is red brick underfoot, and enables visitors to get close to the Terrace of the Three Immortals — those giant rocks in the distance. Folklore says these are the footprints of three Chinese saints.

## EIGHT ARCS ECHO A DRAGON'S MOVEMENT

### IF YOU'RE SERIOUS

The bridge is famous but isolated. Crowds aren't excessive. Non-stop flights to Taipei, Taiwan, are no small undertaking from SFO, JFK and LAX. All of 'em are 14-plus hours with Eva Air ([evaair.com](http://evaair.com)). From Taipei, catch a 40-minute flight to Taitung City. A 30-minute cab ride delivers the dragon.

**THE BRIDGE IS EXPOSED TO WIND AND ROUGH SEAS. CROSSING CAN BE RISKY.**





Madeira's North Coast

## WHERE WE'D GO ...

### NOW

**MADEIRA, PORTUGAL** It was once a sleepy retreat for European retirees to blow their kids' inheritance. Now the archipelago has bloomed beyond high tea. It boasts the world's best year-round climate, spectacular hiking, biking and, yes, Madeira's famous wine. In May, the islands are a virtual botanical garden. And a friendly one; English is spoken in the cities. **ALSO CONSIDER** Hawaii. Bye-bye, spring break. Hello, deals and sunshine.



### AUGUST

#### **BARBADOS**

It's hurricane season. Why Barbados? The island lies south of typical storm paths. But the real draw in August is Crop Over, a festival that celebrates the sugar-cane harvest. Parades, calypso and Rihanna cameos are in play. So are off-season savings. **ALSO CONSIDER** Iceland. Baby puffins are taking flight.

### NOVEMBER

#### **HONG KONG**

This month is a sweet spot when room rates descend while temps hold in the 70s. The latter is a big deal for exploring beyond the city's sprawl. Hike the Dragon's Back trail, enter volcanic landscapes, step onto deserted beaches — all nearby. **ALSO CONSIDER** Sicily. No tourists, rich foods. *Mangia!*



We asked Facebook followers what is the best all-inclusive resort offering.

**59%**

Said:

“ ”



► Cocktails may also be why 53% of you are late getting to the beach (see p. 51).

► 20% chose island tours. “I came to see the place, not to sit on a beach.” — *Claire Kenner*

► 1% opted for babysitting. “Do people actually leave their kids with strangers in foreign countries? I can’t even imagine!” — *Jennifer Little*



### DRONE HOME

From the White House lawn to home pizza deliveries, drones are a buzz. Here at *Islands*, we bought a pair of them two years ago. Sadly, one drone left us for ... Tahiti. Yep, just like that. It got an aerial view of remote Motu Mahana and headed for the horizon. Smart drone. Of course, the incident is one reason drone debates are warranted. In the meantime, our remaining drone has stayed faithful. When we fly it, people are eager to watch. When we land it, they're eager to see the video footage. So are we, even after two years. Look up [islands.com/videos](http://islands.com/videos) to see what we mean. And sorry, no drone footage from Tahiti. — *Eddy Patricelli*



See more and save more with Thrifty.

# Give your wallet a holiday!



## Car Rentals / Corporate Plans

Anguilla: .....	+264-497-2656	Ecuador: .....	+5932-2-228-688	Paraguay: .....	(595)-21-5197310
Antigua: .....	+268-462-9532	El Salvador: .....	+503-2263-7799	Peru: .....	(1) 447-7118
Argentina .....	4816-8001	French Guiana: .....	0590-892803	Puerto Rico: .....	+787-253-2525
Aruba: .....	+297-583-4832	Grand Cayman: .....	1-866-478-3421	St. Barts: .....	0590 52 34 06
Bahamas: .....	+242-377-8300	Guadeloupe: .....	0590-892803	St. Kitts: .....	+869-465-2991
Barbados: .....	+246-416-4456	Guatemala: .....	+502-2277-9070	St. Lucia: .....	+758-451-6150
Belize: .....	+501-207-1271	Honduras: .....	+504-2234-3183	St. Maarten: .....	+599-545-2393
Brazil: .....	+55-92-3584-1293	Jamaica: .....	+876-952-1126	St. Thomas: .....	+340-776-1500
Chile: .....	+56-2-2232-5892	Martinique: .....	0590-892803	Tobago: .....	+868-639-8507
Costa Rica: .....	+506-2257-3434	Mexico: .....	+52-33-3122-5551	Trinidad: .....	+868-669-0602
Curacao: .....	+599-9461-3089	Nicaragua: .....	+505-2255-7981	Turks & Caicos: .....	+649-946-4475
Dominican Republic: .....	+809-333-4000	Panama: .....	+507-204-9555	Uruguay: .....	+598-2481-8170

Worldwide Reservations: 1-800-367-2277 • To book online, please visit **Thrifty.com**

Thrifty features a wide selection of quality vehicles. ©2015 A licensee of DTG Operations, Inc., or its affiliates.

**Thrifty**  
Car Rental





FOR  
\$150  
OR LESS  
A DAY

# TOP 5 GETAWAYS

SEEING KILLER VIEWS  
LIKE THIS DOESN'T  
REQUIRE A SECOND  
MORTGAGE.

Busuanga Island, Philippines

**\$102** A DAY

**EAT** Pancit bihon, \$3.  
**DO** Guided volcano hike with lunch, \$54.  
**STAY** Camiguin Action Geckos Resort, beach bungalow from \$45 a night. [camiguin.ph](http://camiguin.ph)

**1. PHILIPPINES** No need to be a billionaire to claim your own private island in the Philippines. Just hire a local fisherman to ferry you out to any one of thousands of islands (5,000 of the 7,000 are uninhabited) and plant your flag. Some food and a few simple camping supplies are all you'll need to crash for the night (specifically, mosquito nets, rum and something to open coconuts). The sea turtles never ask for tips, and cool, starry nights are free. If camping cramps your style, a stay at a beachfront resort

like Camiguin Action Geckos Resort costs less than a Comfort Suites back home. The priciest part is getting here (see page 24), but interisland flights are cheap and plentiful (though not always online), as are cold beer, local rum and simmering street foods such as the delicious noodle bowl called pancit bihon. All you need now is an insignia for your flag. **WHEN TO GO** Avoid typhoon season, July through September. Deals can be had year-round. **SPEND WHAT YOU SAVE ON** A guided climb up Hibok-Hibok volcano on Camiguin Island. — *Nathan Myers*



  
MOON PALACE®  
JAMAICA GRANDE  
OCHO RIOS  
AWE-INCLUSIVE™

TAKE JAMAICA  
FROM GRAND  
TO GRANDE

LIVE THE PALACE LIFE



MOON PALACE JAMAICA GRANDE. OPENING EARLY 2015.

The FlowRider® Double Wave Simulator. The Playroom kids club. The Awe Spa. It's a total reinvention of all-inclusive, and now it's all here, at Moon Palace Jamaica Grande in Ocho Rios. You may have seen the Caribbean, but you've never seen it like this.

1.888.494.1184 [PalaceResorts.com](http://PalaceResorts.com)



## 2. TORTOLA, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

There's nothing fancy about Sebastian's hotel on Tortola. But each of the 26 rooms does put you within a 30-second walk (weighed down with a cooler and a few towels) from a pretty beach in Little Apple Bay on the quiet north shore (the cruise ships are 9 miles away in Road Town). Do breakfast and lunch at the on-site Seaside Grille (the conch salad is wonderfully unchewy), and for dinner venture to local spots like D'Coalpot, where chef Evelyn arguably makes the island's best roti — it's enough to split. **WHEN TO GO** Shoulder season (May and June) means the best weather for the best price, but don't disregard low season (June to November). Since 1944, a hurricane has hit the British Virgin Islands only once every 11 years, and the last one to cause significant damage was Hurricane Otto in 2010. **SPEND WHAT YOU SAVE ON** sailing. Plan day trips from Tortola to the surrounding islands: flat, remote Anegada for the biggest, cheapest spiny lobster ever; mountainous Virgin Gorda for drinks and 360-degree views at Hog Heaven; and tiny Jost Van Dyke for the whitest sand and strongest cocktails around. Rates start at \$89 per person for day sails. Ferrying between islands is a more wallet-friendly option. — *Audrey St. Clair*

**\$120** A DAY

**EAT** Shrimp roti for two, \$20. **DO** Inter-island ferries from \$25 per person round-trip.

**STAY** Sebastian's hotel, from \$75 a night. [sebastiansbvi.com](http://sebastiansbvi.com)

Bomba's Surfside Shack, Tortola



### SAVINGS TIPS

All the shoreside resorts on Bonaire offer diving that offer a "house" reef. Bring your own gear and usually it's free. (Still need the \$25 reef pass, though.)

Seven Sisters Waterfall on Grenada is a GoPro-worthy hike and swim. Pay \$3 for a walking stick.

For groceries in Hawaii, get a Maika'i loyalty card at Foodland (it's free for visitors).



Dupasunika Island, San Blas

## 3. SAN BLAS, PANAMA

The native Kuna Indians govern the San Blas Islands, still traveling among the 378 isles by hand-carved canoes with sails. Still catching fresh fish and gathering fruit. Still sleeping in hammocks and building shelter with bamboo and thatch. This no-frills escape looks much like it did 1,000 years ago, and a stay at Kuna-owned Akwadup Lodge in one of seven overwater huts feels like it, save for a few welcome comforts such as ordering lobster from your private balcony (under which it was likely just swimming). Views of rainforest and ocean and a blanket of stars are unlike any you've seen. **WHEN TO GO** These isles lie in hurricane country, so early spring is ideal. **SPEND WHAT YOU SAVE ON** Traditional rainbow-hued fabrics called *mola* made by hard-bargaining Kuna women. The best have smooth edges and stitches so small they could be the work of Lilliputians. — AS

**\$128** A DAY

**DO** Rent snorkel gear, \$10 a day. **STAY** Akwadup Lodge, from \$118 a night per person. Includes three meals a day and two daily tours. [akwaduplodge.com](http://akwaduplodge.com)



**DON'T LEAVE THE BVI WITHOUT TRYING A PAINKILLER MADE WITH PUSSEY'S RUM (NOW AVAILABLE IN THE STATES). BUT WHEN BUYING A BOTTLE TO TAKE HOME, ASK FOR THE TRULY LOCAL CALLWOOD RUM.**





## BONAIRE

No other Caribbean island offers a greater variety of DIY-style snorkeling and diving (first purchase the required \$10 snorkeling pass; \$25 for divers). Bonaire's leeward coast, all 24 miles, is dotted with yellow rocks painted with numbers, each marking one of 60-some named reefs, home to sea turtles, squid and yellow-spotted moray eels. To see them, just park the rental car (Caribbean Club Bonaire includes a pickup truck in the room price), walk to the shoreline, don gear and go. Not a water baby? Mountain biking through Washington Slagbaai National Park means snuggling with donkeys or spotting flamingoes near the salt ponds. **WHEN TO GO** Bonaire is outside the hurricane belt, so summer deals can be even cheaper given you can forgo travel insurance. **SPEND WHAT YOU SAVE** On a 90-minute lesson alongside pros at Kiteboarding Bonaire. — *Brooke Morton*

**\$103** A DAY

**EAT** \$12 lionfish at Cactus Blue food truck.

**STAY** Caribbean Club, from \$91 a night. Includes room, rental car, daily breakfast. [caribbeanclubbonaire.com](http://caribbeanclubbonaire.com)




Washington Slagbaai National Park, Bonaire

## WHERE EVEN THE SOPHISTICATION IS LAID BACK



A leisurely swim in sparkling azure waters. A soothing massage on your own private balcony. An afternoon spent gazing at the sun-splashed Atlantic with not a cruise ship or a care in sight. The Sands at Grace Bay offers a soul-satisfying tranquility along with inspired cuisine, considerate service and as much – or as little – activity as you choose.

UNspoiled. UNCOMMON. UNPRETENTIOUS.

For reservations, see your travel professional  
or call 1.877.77.SANDS (72637)    
[thesandstc.com](http://thesandstc.com)



*The Sands*  
AT GRACE BAY

Providenciales • Turks & Caicos

*an exceptional all suite beachfront resort*





Wailuku River, Hilo, Hawaii

**\$150** A DAY

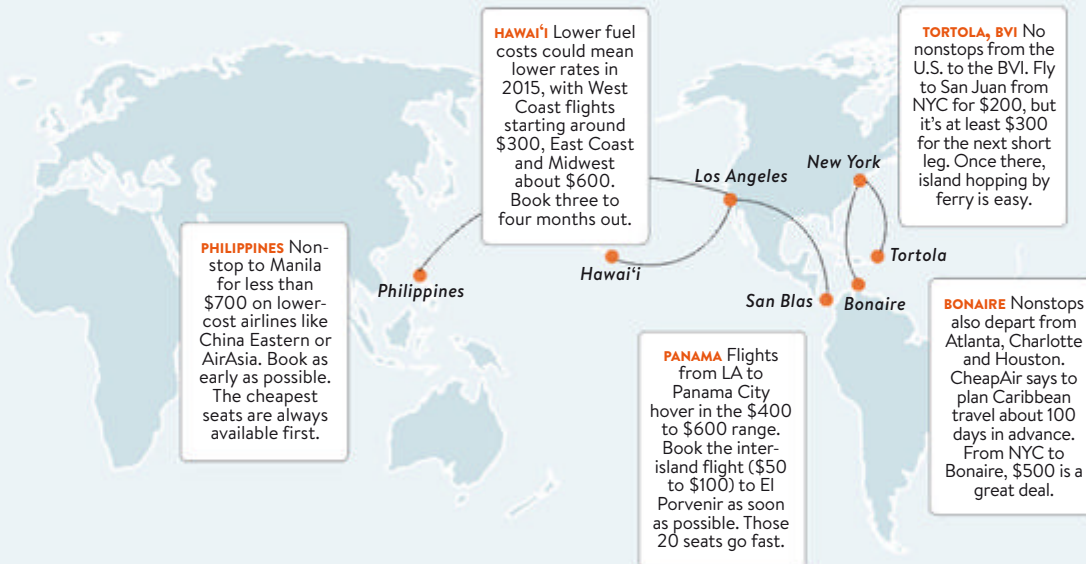
**DO** Stand-up paddle board with Ehu & Kai, \$40. **EAT** Cubed tuna at Da Poke Shack, \$10. **STAY** Pineapple Park Hostel, \$100 a night. [pineapple-park.com](http://pineapple-park.com)

## 5. BIG ISLAND, HAWAII

Walk the beaches of Kona and it's like the rocks have eyes. That's because those coffee-table slabs atop black sand are actually honu — green sea turtles. To see them elsewhere requires snorkeling or waiting till the wee hours when they nest, but here, when the sun shines, they're everywhere. What's not, though, are low-cost hotels and cheap eats. The Pineapple Park Hostel is a bit of a misnomer. Although mostly young people choose it, the place does have private rooms for \$100 in the heart of town on Route 11, where free islandwide buses stop. Take one to Kailua-Kona and hit up Da Poke Shack for cubed raw tuna topped with avocado aioli, but don't eat it there. Get it to go and walk 10 minutes south to Pahoehoe Beach. Poke (pronounced poh-KAY) is the perfect light lunch, so you can ignore that rule from Mom about waiting 30 minutes before swimming. **WHEN TO GO** November to March is ideal — migrating humpback whales think so — and thus prices are higher. Summer brings better deals, so long as you don't mind higher humidity. **SPEND WHAT YOU SAVE ON** stand-up paddling. Invest \$40 for a trip in Kealahou Bay State Park and paddle among spinner dolphins. — *BM*

## GETTING THERE

*Knowing the best time to book and when to go can mean big savings. So can checking Facebook and Twitter for fare blasts and planning travel for Wednesdays.*





**Try Not Getting Stuffed ...**

# ON CAKES AND BAKES

BY ANN VANDERHOOF

**WHERE:** STREETS OF GRENADA

**CONFESSION:** I LICKED MY FINGERS

It's "Fish Friday" in the village of Gouyave, Grenada's self-proclaimed fishing capital. The back streets are closed to traffic, and the catches of the day are barbecuing, frying, stewing, steaming and baking over open fires. It's a little crowded, but I've come this far and I crave grilled lobster. Problem is, I can't see much beyond the first stand, where a woman points to the golden discs she's scooped from hot oil.

"Try my fish cakes, darlin'."

Resistance is stupid. "Just one, please."

A man next to me shakes his head. "You can't have a fish cake without a fry bake."

"OK, one of those too, please."

Munching happily, I continue my lobster hunt. But wait, are those tuna kebabs



at the next stand? Can't pass it up. And what's the smell from the pot across the road? Conch chowder, or "lambi waters." Oh, I have to try the sardine-size "fry jacks" that locals eat like chicken wings.

And then I spy it. Butter-drenched lobsters grilling over the coals. But ... it's too late. I can't manage another bite.



**DO** be careful of unlabeled condiment bottles. It's probably home-made pepper sauce. Two drops will fire up a whole fish.



**DON'T** expect to get your greens. Sides are roasted breadfruit, fried plantains and fried coo-coo, polenta's Caribbean cousin.



## SIRENIS HOTELS & RESORTS

With the perfect mix of excitement & relaxation, Sirenis Hotels & Resorts is the ideal destination for guests of all ages.

**Sirenis Punta Cana** is home to a thrilling water park, and **Grand Sirenis Riviera Maya** boasts its world renowned Spa; both properties offering luxury in the Caribbean.

Book online at  
[www.sirenishotels.com](http://www.sirenishotels.com)  
or Contact  
Your Travel Agent!







## BUY ONE FLIGHT, GET ONE FREE FROM NASSAU

There's never been a better time to get away and share your love for the Out Islands. Share a Goombay Smash. Share a conch salad. Or, share a secret beach! Enjoy a four night stay at the properties below and get free companion airfare.\* But hurry, the free airfare love ends soon.



### FERNANDEZ BAY VILLAGE

#### CAT ISLAND

Discover the breath taking beauty and relaxed atmosphere of Fernandez Bay Village. 16 beachfront cottages on a mile of sugary white sand, outdoor dining, tiki-bar, water sports.  
800-940-1905 • 954-474-4821  
[www.FernandezBayVillage.com](http://www.FernandezBayVillage.com)



### PIGEON CAY CLUB

#### CAT ISLAND

A remote piece of paradise, the cottages offer the ultimate in seclusion and breathtaking views. Located steps from a private 3-mile stretch of white, powdery sand beach. 242-354-5084  
[www.PigeonCayBahamas.com](http://www.PigeonCayBahamas.com)



### TIAMO RESORT

#### ANDROS

Our luxury boutique resort on South Andros Island is an idyllic place for an amazing escape. Relax on the private, white sand beach or enjoy activities such as diving, snorkeling, fishing, and canoeing.  
786-374-2442 • 242-225-6871  
[www.TiamoResorts.com](http://www.TiamoResorts.com)



### BIMINI BIG GAME CLUB RESORT & MARINA

#### BIMINI

Adventure for the Entire Family! Resort, Marina, Fishing Center, Watersports Center and PADI Dive Center. Big Game Bar & Grill, Vegetarian and Gluten free menu. 800-867-4764 • 242-347-3391  
Reservations@biggameclubbimini.com  
[www.BigGameClubBimini.com](http://www.BigGameClubBimini.com)



### STANIEL CAY YACHT CLUB

#### EXUMA CAYS

SCYC is perfect for guests who value casual yet comfortable beauty in a remote, pristine setting. Experience the magic of Thunderball Grotto, feed the unique swimming pigs, and lounge on beaches and sandbars with no footprints but your own.  
954-467-6658 • 242-355-2024  
info@StanielCay.com [www.StanielCay.com](http://www.StanielCay.com)



### VALENTINE'S RESORT & MARINA

#### HARBOUR ISLAND

Real Island Luxury Awaits Your Arrival. Each luxury suite is equipped with a full kitchen, a spacious patio, and incomparable décor. Every detail is a stroke of design genius - from the fabulous fabrics that ribbon throughout the suites, to the sunken tubs in our marble bathrooms. 866-389-6864  
[www.ValentinesResort.com](http://www.ValentinesResort.com)



### STELLA MARIS RESORT CLUB

#### LONG ISLAND

Superb beaches and water sports; beautiful rooms-cottages-villas; attentive services, and many complimentary activities. On tranquil Long Island, in the southern Bahamas.  
800-426-0466 • 242-338-2051  
reservations@StellaMarisResort.com  
[www.StellaMarisResort.com](http://www.StellaMarisResort.com)



### TREASURE CAY BEACH, MARINA & GOLF RESORT

#### ABACO

"One of the best beaches in the world" 3.5 miles powder white beach,\* Unspoiled & Uncrowded \* Championship Golf \* Fly Free Specials \* 3 Bars & Restaurants\* 150 Slip Marina \* Watersports\* Scuba/Snorkeling/ Fishing Charters  
800-327-1584 • [www.TreasureCay.com](http://www.TreasureCay.com)





# LIFE HERE



CK NG/500 PRIME

## NOT HER FIRST STROKE

PHOTO BY CK NG

### IF YOU'RE CURIOUS

For many of the Bajau Laut (sea dwellers) of Semporna, life begins with a paddle. Stilt houses and floating rafts serve as homes, and the reefs provide food. Land is a place where burials occur. Life occurs at sea.

### IF YOU'RE SERIOUS

Tens of thousands of Bajau Laut live off the coast of Semporna, Borneo. It's a day-plus of flying to see them. The fastest route is via Kuala Lumpur, where AirAsia services Tawau. From there, the Bajau Laut are a taxi ride away.



# A KICK IN THE TEETH

BY EDWARD READICKER-HENDERSON

**WHERE:** YAP (WESTERN PACIFIC)  
**THE FIND:** NUTTY FEELINGS

Sadly, I get no kick from champagne. It's among a variety of weirdnesses — the toothpaste taste of vanilla rum in St. Barts is another — that do nothing for me. Nada. Zip. I have drained cruise ships dry of everything short of rubbing alcohol. In Fiji, I drank kava for three straight hours, downing shell for shell with the locals, and all that happened was a need for many trips to the bathroom. My body simply absorbs intoxicants and says *Yeah, where's the fun stuff?*

Yap, a dot between Guam and Palau, may be my last chance for an island buzz.

"Every foreigner who comes here tries this," says Richard, a local I've befriended, handing me a betel nut. It's about the size of a pecan, the color of old bamboo. We lean back against the logs of the village Men's House — inside, maybe big enough for half-court basketball — shaded by jungle plants. The waves on the reef are as peaceful as a dog snoring.

During this trip I've learned the biggest social taboo on Yap: touching someone's basket of betel nuts. And the worst crime: stealing betel nuts off someone's land.

"How many do you chew?" I ask.

"About 40 a day," Richard says.

So even though the guidebooks describe betel as a "mild intoxicant," having to pop a new one every 15 minutes, like Richard does, sounds about as intoxicating as Chiclets.

It also means everybody looks like they've been eating tomatoes. Mouths are stained the kind of technicolor red you see only in 1960s vampire movies. That's the first big side effect of betel: It cranks the saliva glands up to 11 and then turns all that spit red, so when people talk it's like Jackson Pollock flinging paint.

"Nobody in Japan would sit next to me on the train," one guy tells me through a red smile. "They thought my mouth was bleeding."

There is a bigger downside. In betel-chewing cultures, mouth cancer is rampant. According to studies, betel



## INSIDE THE CHOCOLATE



TOBACCO LEAVES

English candy maker says its chocolate bar has "notes of vanilla and hay." Yum!



CHILI PEPPER

One chocolate bar from Cozumel practically left skid marks on our tongues.



KAVA

Warning: This Maui chocolate bar should not be handed out at Halloween.

causes or aggravates conditions such as neuronal injury, heart problems, liver toxicity, asthma and Type 2 diabetes.

But we don't talk about that any more than we'd likely talk about the side effects of soda during a picnic back home.

Richard leads me to the edge of the Men's House platform (he doesn't want me drooling on the village's pride and joy) and shows me what to do: crack the nut, sprinkle in lime, wrap it in a leaf, chew.

"Maybe only 10 percent of foreigners like it," Richard says, watching me closely as I chew. And chew. And chew.

Betel is fibrous, the way I'd imagine chewing rope, like a Slim Jim with visions of immortality. The red saliva starts to flow, quickly leaking through my beard. The lime tang disappears into the peppery nut. Kava might taste like this, if kava didn't taste like mud.

And then the back of my neck starts to feel warm, nicely warm. My head spins like I'm hitting all the hard curves on a roller coaster. I look at my wiggling fingers, and think deep thoughts: "Hey, wiggling fingers."

Plain and simple: I get a kick. The promise of chemistry at last. I should probably sit down for this, I think, and then I realize I am sitting down.

Richard smiles at me, his mouth looking like it's bleeding. I smile bright red blood right back.

**MOST EXOTIC TRIPS:** [islands.com](http://islands.com)

Chewing betel does not draw blood, but it does have other health risks. It's still a common friendship offering in certain Pacific cultures.





WELCOME TO THE NEW RIVIERA



**THE BAHAMIAN RIVIERA AWAITS.** Introducing a glamorous new playground with the world's most celebrated hotels, including the dazzling debut of the Baha Mar Casino & Hotel. Get ready for the rendezvous of the century in Nassau, The Bahamas. For reservations visit [BahaMar.com](http://BahaMar.com) | 844.800.BAHA

BAHA MAR CASINO & HOTEL | ROSEWOOD | SLS LUX | GRAND HYATT | THE RESIDENCES



**WHAT I DO  
HERE****1. ANGUILLA DAY**

May 31 is when floating barges with bands follow the boat races. An epic beach party.

**2. BEACH BBQ**

Wednesday nights at Cap Juluca the Caribbean food includes traditional rice and peas, which really aren't peas at all (they're pigeon peas).

**3. HERITAGE COLLECTION**

The museum, run by Colville Petty, reveals Anguilla's history.

# ANGUILLAN HAPPINESS

HE IS A WORLDWIDE SUPERSTAR IN A SPORT WE MISTAKE FOR A BUG. NOW HOME, HE SHARES WHAT MATTERS.



CARDIGAN CONNOR

AGE

53

OCCUPATION

Guest Relations, Cap Juluca;  
Cricket Development  
Officer

FORMER LIFE

Cricketer in England and  
Australia

**I spent a night in jail when I was 12.** I was playing cricket in the park and it got dark and I didn't have a way home, which was 8 miles away. So I went to the police station. They fed me and let me spend the night in an empty cell. The next morning I got up and walked the 8 miles home.

**There was no electricity on the island when I was a kid.** When I left for England to play cricket in 1976, there were a few guest houses. No hotels.

**All Anguilla kids grow up loving boat racing.** It's in our culture. When fishing boats would come back in the afternoon, we'd go to the shore and help pull the boats out. The fishermen gave us a fish as a thank-you. The fishing boats are also used in the boat races.

**The big boat race is called August Monday.** It starts at 4:30 a.m. (Aug. 3 this year) with revelers at Sandy Ground. Women on the island wear as little as possible.

**My favorite Anguilla beach is Little Bay.** It's unknown because you have to either boat there or climb down by rope. The beach is protected. You'll likely see turtles and all kinds of fish in the bay.

**Get on Happiness and go to Sandy Island for the day.**

Happiness is the sea shuttle from Sandy Ground to Sandy Island. The island has a beach and a little beach shack where the thing to get is the crayfish. That and JoJo's rum punch.

**At night go to Dune Preserve.**

That's Bankie Banx's beach bar on Rendezvous Bay. Bankie and his son Omari are the most famous reggae artists on the island.

**Every kid here dreams of playing for the West Indies cricket team.** The first to do so was Omari Banx. When he went to the airport to leave, the entire island showed up. It became a national holiday. That's how big cricket is to us. — as told to David Lansing



Anguillans know each other. Tell your taxi driver your server last night was Fiona. 'Oh yeah, Fiona. My mom cuts her hair.'

**CHANGING  
ANGUILLA**

"It used to be that when kids grew up they had to leave the island because there was no work. With the resorts and restaurants came jobs, and now you can grow up on the island and stay here.

That's changed family life for the better." — CC



# LOW KEY ON KAUAI

BY SARAH SEKULA

It was the surf that drew Cheri Hamilton (right, with husband, Tom) from San Diego to Kauai's North Shore more than 30 years ago. The same surf where their daughter, Bethany, lost an arm to a 14-foot tiger shark in 2003. Bethany's story sparked a book, a movie and a recent appearance on *The Amazing Race*.

**Q: So, what about Mom and Dad?**

**A:** [Cheri] Most days I baby-sit and promote my book, *Raising a Soul Surfer*. Tom waits tables at the St. Regis Hotel.

**Q: No reality TV appearances for you.**

**A:** We're simple people. [Photo at right was taken at a friend's house.] When we were raising the three kids, we were each working three jobs to pay the bills. But we always had time for surfing.

**Q: Kauai's expensive for simple living.**

**A:** We forage for sales, hit the farmers

markets and visit friends with fruit trees. And we don't have air conditioning.

**Q: No AC in Hawaii?**

**A:** Our house is high enough to catch the trade winds and to allow us to sleep through the tsunami alerts. But we're still within walking distance of the ocean.

**Q: The ocean that impacted your life.**

**A:** My first surf session was at Tunnels Reef, the same place where Bethany was attacked by the shark years later. Instead of destroying us, God used that incident to impact people all over the world.

**Q: You have unique payoffs on Kauai.**

**A:** We see double rainbows and moon bows. The night Bethany was born was the only time I've ever seen a triple rainbow. We're in awe of our creator every day. Kauai is his special handiwork.

**MOVE TO KAUAI:** [islands.com/bitlo](http://islands.com/bitlo)



*"I named a cat after my favorite fruit, lilikoi. We almost named Bethany 'Lilikoi.'"*

Two perfect choices on Grace Bay,  
Ocean Club on the peaceful end and Ocean Club West in the heart of it all.

  
**OCEAN CLUB RESORTS**  
*Deluxe Beachfront Suites*  
PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS & CAICOS

[oceanclubresorts.com](http://oceanclubresorts.com) • 649.946.5880 • 800.457.8787





SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

# *Discover Hawai'i with Your Family*

Adventures with Aloha Across The Archipelago







Nāpali Coast, Kauaʻi




Waimea Canyon, Kauaʻi

### Few destinations rival Hawaiʻi for sheer natural beauty, drama and scale.

This is the place to take your 'ohana (family) for unforgettable adventures and memories to last a lifetime. And it's where fun in the sun and learning go hand in hand. Surfing? The sport was born in Hawaiʻi. Pearl Harbor? The moving stories of those who served and sacrificed during WWII resonate here. Kīlauea? Active lava flows provide a geology lesson. You'll experience the warm welcome and aloha spirit from locals who are eager to share their islands with you and your keiki (children). From towering emerald sea cliffs and vibrantly hued underwater reefs, to world-class museums and poignant memorials, Hawaiʻi's natural beauty, cultural wonders, and historical riches await.

### *Kaua'i*

Cycle down a canyon, sail along remote shores, and float through breathtaking scenery.

 **EXPLORE WAIMEA CANYON** Fourteen miles long, one mile wide, and nearly 4,000 feet deep, with crested buttes, rugged crags, and deep gorges, Waimea has been dubbed the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific." The Waimea Canyon Bicycle Downhill adventure with **Outfitters Kauaʻi** ([outfitterskauai.com](http://outfitterskauai.com)) is an exhilarating half-day downhill ride available morning or afternoon. You'll start at 3,600 feet, cycle down to sea level, stopping to take in canyon and ocean vistas while the guide shares information about the culture, history, and folklore of Kauaʻi. The family friendly excursion is open to youth ages 12 and up.



Explore Hawaii's sky blue waters. Walk its soft sandy shores. Feel the rhythm of island life. Stay at an Aston hotel or condominium resort on Oahu, Maui, Kauai or Hawaii Island and enjoy picture perfect settings, island inspired accommodations and true Aston hospitality. Let Aston welcome you with its 65-year tradition of service and aloha.

866.774.2924 | [AstonHotels.com](http://AstonHotels.com)





**SAIL THE NĀPALI COAST** Kauaʻi's remote northwest Nāpali Coast — home to verdant sea cliffs, lava tubes and cascading waterfalls — is accessible only by hiking or boat. Summer is the right time to view this enchanted shoreline from the water. Families love the Na Pali Snorkel Adventure with **Captain Andy's Sailing** ([napali.com](http://napali.com)). The five-hour scenic sailing cruise aboard the 55-foot custom catamaran will include vistas of this incredible coastline, glimpses of Hawaiian spinner dolphins, anchoring at a tropical reef to snorkel, and learning about the history and legends of the ancient Hawaiians who once lived within these coastal valleys.

**GO MOUNTAIN TUBING ON HISTORIC WATERWAYS** Over a century ago, Lihu'e Sugar Plantation laborers built the Hanamā'ulu ditch system: a series of canals and tunnels to irrigate the sugar cane fields. While the plantation is closed, **Kauaʻi Backcountry Adventures** ([kauaibackcountry.com](http://kauaibackcountry.com)) has exclusive access to this historic irrigation system, which now provides a unique mountain tubing experience. Your guide will discuss island history during the drive to the launch point deep in Kauaʻi's pristine interior. Once there, you'll receive a tube and headlamp and launch into the gently flowing waters. As you float through open canals, tunnels, and flumes built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, you'll marvel at these spectacular engineering feats and Kauaʻi's incredible natural surroundings.

## O'ahu

Ride the waves, step back in time, and explore the quiet North Shore.

**TAKE A SURF LESSON AT WAIKĪKĪ** What could be more quintessentially Hawaiian than surfing at Waikīkī Beach, where the gentle rolling waves provide excellent year round conditions for surfers from beginning to advanced? This idyllic shoreline, with iconic Diamond Head on the eastern end, is where Hawaiian royals reigned and rode the waves for centuries. **Hans Hedemann Surf School's** ([hhsurf.com](http://hhsurf.com)) two-hour, semi-private lesson (up to three participants) is recommended for families that want a single instructor. You'll be able to catch more waves than in a group lesson and the instructor can adjust more easily to your family's skill levels.

**WITNESS HISTORY AT PEARL HARBOR** On December 7, 1941, the Japanese Naval Forces attacked Pearl Harbor and catapulted the U.S. into what ultimately became World War II. The USS *Arizona* battleship sunk that day, becoming the final resting place for 1,177 crewmen, a loss of life representing over half the Americans killed during the worst naval attack in U.S. history. Four extraordinary monuments bring that global struggle to life at **Pearl Harbor Historic Sites** ([pearlharborhistoricsites.org](http://pearlharborhistoricsites.org)): the USS *Arizona* Memorial, the USS Battleship *Missouri* Memorial, the USS *Bowfin* Submarine Museum & Park, and Pacific Aviation Museum. The Pearl Harbor Visitors Center also features fascinating exhibits about the attack on Pearl Harbor and what ensued. You may also have the opportunity to meet military veterans who survived that day and are happy to share their stories.



Diamond Head, O'ahu



Pearl Harbor, O'ahu

**HEAD TO THE NORTH SHORE** O'ahu's fabled North Shore, with its massive waves, is the winter headquarters for international championship surfing. This gorgeous coast takes on a laid back vibe when the waves calm in spring and summer. Take Pali Highway from Honolulu and stop at the Nu'uuanu Pali Lookout for impressive Windward Coast panoramas. Then, continue along the Windward Coast to the North Shore, admiring the sapphire Pacific and emerald cliffs. Once on the North Shore, stop for a plate lunch at Giovanni's Shrimp Truck in Kahuku, learn how ancient Hawaiians thrived in pristine Waimea Valley, stop for photos at celebrated surfing locations Banzai Pipeline and Sunset Beach, and cool off with a home-made Hawaiian shave ice at Matsumoto's in Hale'iwa.

## Maui

Climb a volcano, explore a magical, winding road, and take it easy on a gorgeous beach.

**SEE SUNRISE ON HALEAKALĀ** Once you experience sunrise at the summit of 10,000-foot high Haleakalā volcano, you'll understand why it means "House of the Sun." Set your alarm very early, dress warmly, and bring extra blankets, as the early morning summit temperatures are frigid. Sunsets and



Morning sun on Haleakalā, Maui



Ho'okipa Beach, Maui





Exploring near Honu (turtle), Hawai'i Island



Halema'uma'u Crater, Hawai'i Island

starry nights on top are also dreamy. If you prefer daylight, **Hike Maui's** ([hikemaui.com](http://hikemaui.com)) Haleakalā Crater Hike is a seven-hour, family-friendly adventure (minimum age: eight) offering a two-mile hike at the 10,000-foot summit where enormous cinder cones dominate the desert-like, expansive scenery, and another two-mile hike at 8,000 feet on a lava trail lined with rare native plant species.

**TAKE THE ROAD TO HĀNA** Maui's remote eastern coast is home to Hāna, a peaceful, unspoiled paradise. Reaching Hāna entails one of the world's most enchanting and awe-inspiring drives. Leave early because the Hāna Highway—a 52-mile drive from Kahului with 620 curves, 59 bridges, and amazing vistas—can take a few hours. You'll drive through rainforests and bamboo forests, and by cascading waterfalls, deep pools, taro patches, botanical gardens, and beaches. Stop along the way to hike, get wet, snap a few pictures, or picnic. Once in Hāna, visit Hasegawa General store and Hana Ranch Store for souvenirs or sunbathe at Hāna Beach Park.

**RELAX ON KĀ'ANAPALI BEACH** Who says every moment has to be planned? You're in Hawai'i. Just relax together with your youngsters on one of America's most stunning stretches of sand, once a retreat for Hawaiian ali'i (royalty). The beach,

fronting many major resorts and condominiums, is ideal for snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, snuba, windsurfing, parasailing and bodyboarding. You might even opt for a daytime or sunset sail or cruise. Don't miss the daily sunset cliff diving ceremony at Pu'u Keka'a (Black Rock), the reenactment of a feat by Maui's revered King Kahekili who lived in the 1700s.

## Hawai'i Island

Experience Pele (the Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes), explore underwater marvels, and discover the connections between today's astronomers and early Polynesian voyagers.

**WITNESS KĪLAUEA** The Hawaiian Islands are the result of massive volcanic activity and today's lava flows demonstrate how powerful these forces still are. **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park** ([nps.gov/havo](http://nps.gov/havo)), is home to two active volcanoes, Kilauea and Mauna Loa, and seven ecological zones. This inspiring and culturally significant place is also a World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Preserve. Begin at Kilauea Visitor Center for current information on eruption activity, roads, interpretive programs, weather, and the park orientation film. Explore the summit of Kilauea via the Crater Rim Drive which passes through lush tropical rainforest and provides views of the currently active summit caldera as well as access to well marked scenic stops and short walks. Jaggar Museum, perched on the edge of Kilauea Caldera, has exhibits on the geology of Hawaiian volcanoes and provides great views of Halema'uma'u Crater vent. If you prefer to have someone else do the driving, **Hawai'i Forest & Trail's** ([hawaii-forest.com](http://hawaii-forest.com)) Kilauea Volcano Adventure is an 11-12 hour adventure that reveals the dramatic biodiversity and enormity of Hawai'i Island.

**SNORKEL AN HISTORIC BAY** Kealahou Bay is a Marine Life Conservation District with pristine, clear waters filled with schools of tropical fish and coral reefs. It's also the site where Captain James Cook landed on Hawai'i Island and died just one year later. Families can experience Kealahou Bay on **Fair Wind's** ([fair-wind.com](http://fair-wind.com)) Morning Snorkel Cruise & BBQ or the Afternoon Snorkel Cruise, both aboard the *Fair Wind II* catamaran. You'll enjoy a gorgeous cruise south from Keauhou Bay along the Kona coast to Kealahou Bay where you will snorkel, play on the catamaran's two 15-foot water slides and dive platform, learn about the area history, and view the Captain Cook Monument.

**EXPLORE THE STARS AND THE OCEANS IN HILO** Don't miss the dazzling **'Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai'i** ([imiloahawaii.org](http://imiloahawaii.org)) in Hilo which is dedicated to the connections between Hawaiian culture and natural history, the early Polynesians' navigation history and knowledge of the night skies, and the astronomical research conducted at Mauna Kea. The amazing complex features three titanium-covered cones representing the volcanoes of Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa and Hualālai. The award winning landscaping includes one of the state's largest collections of endemic, indigenous, and "canoe" plants (brought by Polynesians). 'Imiloa exhibits, planetarium shows and native gardens will keep your family engrossed for hours. ☀



## This Summer, Make It Makena with The Family

We know that vacation time is precious and we'd like to help you make Makena Beach & Golf Resort your choice to include as many members of the family. We appreciate the times when grandparents and extended family chip in to help so why not include them in your family vacation to Maui?

Makena's 5th Night Free Package and our Family Pak inclusions make it affordable to bring along those who really matter. We will put all rooms as close together on the same floor for this Added Family Summer Special.

Call 1-800-321-6284 or your favorite travel agent for more information on savings and extras for your family vacation in Maui. Or book at [www.makenaresortmaui.com](http://www.makenaresortmaui.com)



LIFESTYLE  
*Preferred*  
HOTELS & RESORTS

5400 Makena Alanui  
Wailea-Makena, Maui,  
Hawaii 96753



An aerial photograph of the Bahamas, showing a vast expanse of turquoise water with several small, low-lying islands and atolls. The water's color transitions from a deep blue in the distance to a lighter, almost white turquoise near the shorelines. A small white sailboat is visible in the lower right quadrant of the image.

# The Bahamas

Read that headline again. The “s” is emphasized for a reason. Because these could be the most traveled and least understood islands in the world. Take Nassau, for example. It isn’t even an island; it’s a *city* on New Providence Island. And for this story it’s a launching pad to islands most travelers have never really known. Islands known as the Bahamas.

**Story by Jad Davenport**





JUAN CARLOS MUÑOZ ROBERDO/AGE FOTOSTOCK

Just 35 miles southeast of Nassau is the start of the 130-mile-long Exumas chain.



# Exumas

IT'S THE BAHAMAS TRIP I HAD IN MIND ALL ALONG. Body surfing Cable Beach. Playing with Lady Luck in the casinos on Paradise Island. Tipping back Pusser's rum punches with the cruise-ship crowd. I'd come to believe that Nassau, a city only the size of a township in Kansas, *is* the Bahamas.

But then one afternoon by the pool I idly flip through the unread section of my guidebook. I knew there were 700 islands beyond Nassau and its island home of New Providence — little sand spits and atolls that are thought to be unreachable, leaving visitors to sit and read about them. Call it the pull of Nassau's gravity. One page in the book proclaims that the Exumas has the world's most beautiful beach.

I also see this: Flights leave Nassau daily.

The next morning I check out of my hotel and board a southbound plane to find this beach.

It becomes clear during my flight that I'll need help. The Exumas are 360 islands covering an area 130 miles long, so before I land on Great Exuma, the largest island in the Exumas chain, I've flown over hundreds of sandy islets and palm-tufted cays. All beautiful.

When we do land, I stop for a cold Coke at Kermit's Airport Lounge, and meet its namesake. He's bringing in a bag of sweet Exuma onions from his garden, and he smiles when I tell him I'm on a hunt for the best beach in the Exumas.

"They're all beautiful," he says.

"Yeah, but what's the ultimate A+ beach?" I ask.

Kermit wipes sweat from his cheek. He pauses for a moment and seems to study the gentle sway of the casuarina trees. "I'll give you the best beach in all the Bahamas. But today it will be a C beach."

"C like average?"

He wrinkles his eyebrows. "No, child. C like the shape," and he creates the letter with his rough hand.

The word "Bahamas" means "shallow seas," and the definition is a perfect fit here. "You can walk out to the horizon and you'll be in waist-deep water," says Kermit. "The best beach changes hour to hour, depending on the wind and tides. Today, go to the Tropic of Cancer beach. Sit in the sea like we do and the tide will wash your worries out to sea."

Just as Kermit said, it's a straight 30-minute drive to an unmarked road 2 miles south of the hill. I haven't been this alone in a week. Coral sand pops under my tires as I pull into an empty parking lot.



The world's most beautiful beach is somewhere in the Exumas, as are the best conch fritters. Both subjects are debated among the local people.

Just beyond a low screen of casuarinas the sky and sea open up before me in a dazzling sweep of white sand and water.

Back in Nassau this beach would be hemmed in by megaresorts and sun worshippers. But apart from a solitary frigatebird cruising the thermals, I'm completely alone. It's a precious sort of privacy that two days ago I didn't associate with the Bahamas. I slowly wade into the 82-degree water that's so blue and so still the horizon in front of me is only a suggestion.

But my book says there's something big out there.

**NEXT: THE BAHAMAS HAS A MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB.**

The Bahamas  
Out Islands



## ONLY HERE

The question of how many beaches are in the Exumas is literally impossible to answer — they come and go with tides. One of the few bridges in the Bahamas is single-lane span that connects Great Exuma to Little Exuma. By the way, you can bypass Nassau and fly directly to Great Exuma from Atlanta, Miami, Fort Lauderdale or Toronto.

## THE NEXT ISLAND OUT

A mile off the Great Exuma shore by boat is the strip of sand called Stocking Island. Accessed by boat, it has a few small resorts but reports only 10 full-time residents. Fly another 48 miles southeast from Nassau and you're on Long Island, home to the deepest blue hole in the world (Dean's) and sea cliffs that bring some travelers to claim the island is the most picturesque in the entire Bahamas group.





Sandbar off Musha Cay,  
100 miles south of Nassau.



# Cat Island

THE NEXT ISLAND OUT FROM GREAT EXUMA IS ONLY 40 miles away. Word is it's one of the most mysterious places in all of the Bahamas. It would be an easy flight from here, except that a direct route isn't possible. I have to fly back to the hub of Nassau (it's that gravity thing again) to catch the biweekly flight to Cat Island, which becomes a 130-mile ride. The yo-yo travel deters most travelers from exploring, but I have to see this mountain.

Long and thin, with a population smaller than that of a Vermont liberal-arts college (about 1,600), Cat is a carousel of small fishing villages and farming communities. It's all tucked between the sea and a range of rolling green hills, one of them allegedly the tallest peak in the nation of the Bahamas. My guidebook gives me a name — Mount Alvernia — but only a rough location. Eyeballing the landscape gives me no clue, as there aren't any rock faces or jagged points reaching for the clouds.

With no road signs pointing the way, I cruise into The Bight, the island's main village, and ask a group of school kids for directions. The eldest girl in the group steps forward and speaks up. I can tell right away she's been educated about her homeland.

"Mount Alvernia? It's our country's highest mountain," she says, "208 feet tall."

I do the math in my head. I think the Atlantis Resort back on Nassau might be taller than that.

The girl tells me the story of Father Jerome, a



Pamela Poitier (below), daughter of actor Sidney Poitier, lives on the island of castle ruins, hermits and the highest perspective in all of the Bahamas.

Catholic monk who built a rambling hermitage on top of the mountain. He designed it as a scale model of St. Francis' famous Tuscan retreat in Al Verna. "The hill used to be called Como Hill, but after he built his home there, everyone called it Mount Alvernia."

She points me in the right direction, and a few minutes later I'm at the end of a dusty one-track road, just half a mile from town. There's no telling how long it's been since anyone else has been on the trail. It's rocky and overgrown with dry bushes that claw at my legs. Lizards scamper out of the way.

I never even take a water break because it takes me all of three minutes to climb to the top of Mount Alvernia, a personal mountain-climbing record for this Colorado boy. Up here I walk around Father Jerome's hermitage, which stands gray and weathered against the sky, and find his crypt, which is tucked into the side of the hill.

This view, by Bahamian standards, is grand, a sweeping 360 degrees of the long thin boot of Cat Island kicking out into Exuma Sound. The Bahamas, a geologist once told me, are really the relics of an ancient mountain range. All around this island are submarine canyons as deep as 10,000 feet. So I'm really standing on top of a 10,206-foot mountain.

Mount Alvernia is pretty rugged for the Bahamas. But I've got a page folded over in my guidebook that marks a less-traversed and more rugged wilderness.

**NEXT: THE BAHAMAS' LAST TRUE FRONTIER**







Mount Alvernia Hermitage  
at the top of Como Hill.

#### The Bahamas Out Islands



#### ONLY HERE

There are barely 10 people per square mile on Cat Island, and they are among the most resourceful folks anywhere. Visitors will make friends forever by leaving behind saws, wood blocks and fishing line. The islanders use those objects (plus tin washtubs and goatskin) to play a type of music that originated here: rake and scrape.

#### THE NEXT ISLAND OUT

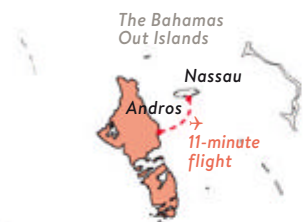
Farther east of Cat Island (about an hour flight from Nassau) is San Salvador Island, allegedly the first landmass that Columbus saw on his maiden voyage to the New World (there's even an underwater monument to mark where the *Pinta* may have dropped anchor). Columbus and crew were fortunate to skirt around the shallows that have taken down dozens of ships since then. On the island's interior, a body of water called Great Lake stretches about 10 miles, most of San Salvador's length.





Rental cottage at  
Kamalame Cay off Andros





# Andros

## ONLY HERE

It is the largest island in the Bahamas and, get this, the fifth largest in the entire Caribbean. But it's known more for wetlands and blue holes (178 of the underwater caves are found on the island) than for development or tourism. Offshore, a drop of nearly 6,000 feet and an enormous barrier reef separate Andros from Nassau.

## THE NEXT ISLANDS OUT

About 20 miles off the northern tip of Andros is the start of the Berry Islands. Most of the 30-some cays are vacant. But overall the Berry Islands probably draw as many people as Andros does or more, because included in the group are private islands for Norwegian (Great Stirrup Cay) and Royal Caribbean (Coco Cay) cruise lines. It's also said that the Berry Islands have more millionaires per square inch than any place in the world.

TO REACH THIS WILD SPOT IN THE CHAIN, OF COURSE, I have to fly back to Nassau again. And then I brace for it: an 11-minute flight from the cosmopolitan chaos to the tangled swamp of Andros, an island larger than all the other Bahamas combined. That it's so big, so accessible and yet so wild is one of the great oddities of these islands (it's also home base to the world's third-longest reef).

The puzzle pieces come together when Peter Douglas, a naturalist and local guide, picks me up at the airport and drives me into Central Andros National Park. He says some of the endless forest almost came down a number of years ago.

"There were these investors who had their own ideas on what to do with Andros," he says as we pass through small clapboard villages. "They wanted to mine and quarry the limestone to make flooring for houses in Florida. They also wanted to cut down the Andros pines to make nice pieces of furniture. All this pressure was on. At the same time our minister of the fisheries was about to license Taiwanese to do longline fishing. It would have changed everything."

But the locals banded together and became home-grown conservationists. They created the national park. The development plan, in a sense, worked in reverse. Today the island remains much as it always has, with barely 10,000 islanders and more than 2,300 square miles of wilderness.

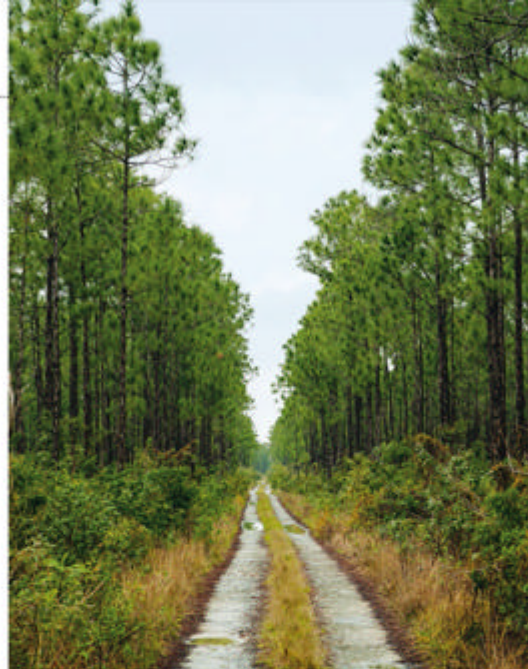
"Is there a traffic light anywhere?" I ask as we rattle down the arrow-straight Queen's Highway.

"They put one in up north," Peter says. "But it just confused people and caused too many accidents. They had to take it out."

The smell of low tide mingles with ash when Peter parks at a trail head near the end of an abandoned logging road. "Could be old-timers trying to smoke land crabs out of their burrows," Peter says as we set out hiking down a faint trail. "Or it could be forest fires."

I try to wrap my head around an island so wild that forest fires could burn and nobody would know it, probably not until the smoke wafts over to Nassau.

The sun is high but we're lost in shade as we hike through the palmettos and pines. Peter points out bushes used for medicine, reminding me of other out islands I've read about during my flights back and forth to Nassau. Islands like the Abacos, where fathers and sons build wooden boats without tape



After multiple flights back and forth to Nassau, the author landed on the most remote Bahamian discovery, practically next door to where he started.

measures. Or Long Island, home to the deepest known blue hole on Earth. There's Conception, which requires a floatplane to what has been called "the end of the world." And that's the wonderful part of the Bahamas. They go on and on, and they only end when and where you want them to.

For now I'm happy to be on this island, this page, free of the gravity that a few days ago held me in that city on New Providence Island. I follow closely behind Peter as he winds his way deeper into a forest.

 **EASIEST ISLAND GETAWAYS:** [islands.com](http://islands.com)





The Baths, BVI

M. SWIET PRODUCTIONS/GETTY



# BEST CARIBBEAN BEACHES

We cringe every time we see a “best beach” ranking. So we decided to take our turn at it. “We” means *Islands* editors, photographers and contributors who have landed on literally hundreds of Caribbean beaches on purpose or by accident.

**How We Rated Them** Is it easy to get to (access)? Is it quiet (privacy)? Does it make the toes say “ahh” (texture)? Is there an escape from the sun (shade)? And finally, could you sleep and find food here in a real pinch (castaway factor)?

## OUR TOP 5

	ACCESS	PRIVACY	TEXTURE	SHADE	CASTAWAY FACTOR	TOTAL
1 THE BATHS, BVI	10	8	9	9	9	45
Get here by car or boat, and squeeze between rocks to your own spot.						
2 PLAYA ZONI, CULEBRA	9	10	9	7	9	44
Easy to find on day trips, but Puerto Rico visitors don't know about it.						
3 LITTLE BAY, ANGUILLA	8	9	9	7	10	43
Surrounded by cliffs at the end of a trail; just you and the marine life.						
4 BATHSHEBA, BARBADOS	9	8	6	10	9	42
Unique because caves provide shade on the sand <i>and</i> in the water.						
5 LOW BAY, BARBUDA	6	10	10	5	9	40
The pink sand is so unblemished and soft you sink up to your calves in it.						

SEE OUR ENTIRE TOP 25: [islands.com](https://islands.com)



BEST  
CARIBBEAN  
BEACHES



White Bay



Flamenco Beach



# f YOUR TOP 5 BEACHES

## 1 SEVEN MILE BEACH

### Grand Cayman

The lofty ranking has something to do with the large number of people who've visited this pretty stretch of beach, which officially measures 5½ miles.

## 2 WHITE BAY BVI

The island of Jost Van Dyke might have the highest ratio of beach bars to population (12 to 297). The result is a laid-back party scene that attracts longtime Caribbean travelers.

## 3 GRACE BAY Turks and Caicos

The secret of a few years ago is out: For sheer beauty nothing tops these white sand dunes playing against perhaps the best water in the Caribbean. Maybe that's why you love it so much, even with the crowds.

## 4 FLAMENCO BEACH Culebra

All of Culebra feels much farther than 20 miles from mainland Puerto Rico. It's slow, with development on the horseshoe-shaped beach limited to food shacks. That said, it's busier than Playa Zoni (see previous page).

## 5 EAGLE BEACH Aruba

Arguably the nicest beach on the island is white, wide and very public. The sea breezes make it a popular wind-surfing and kiteboarding playground.

## MR. SANDMAN

This is his livelihood



Mark Mason traded in his high-paying job in sales to make sand castles for a living. Don't think this is playtime for him — not entirely. Companies like

Disney and Coca-Cola hire Mark and his crew, aka Team Sandtastic, to build custom sand sculptures, some going for more than \$100,000 a pop. They also build sculptures for major personal events like wedding proposals. So yeah, the guy knows his sand — but he isn't immune from mistakes.

**For one proposal I misspelled the girl's name.** The guy was so nervous he missed it too. It was brought to my attention just in the nick of time. I quickly recarved it before mayhem ensued.

**The best sand is in the Bahamas.** Also ranking up there is Grand Cayman. One year, the Ritz-Carlton there had us create a 1,500-ton dine-in sand sculpture for more than 450 guests to fit inside.

**Worst sand for what I do, but a great location, would be the black sands of Maui.** It's ground lava and is not conducive to building castles, or anything.

**We use an eclectic array of tools.**



Spatulas and measuring cups. Straws and melon ballers. It's the details.

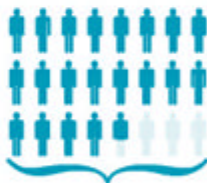
**I found a gold ring once** while shoveling in a huge [future Guinness World Record] sand sculpture on Galveston Island near Houston. Thankfully, I have not found any dead bodies, yet.

**People love their dogs.** And they can't always bring them to the beaches. So we've been asked to carve a good many dog replicas in lieu of having the real thing at a wedding or a proposal. Recently, I carved a dog holding the ring in its paw. Back in the 1990s my fiancée and I lived on St. Thomas, and we flew our dog to our wedding in Fort Lauderdale, so I understand.

**When I'm not working** I'm hanging out on Lido Key in Sarasota, Florida, and yes, I'm usually making sculptures on the beach. Just for fun.

**People are surprised to find out this is my profession.** They look at me like, "No, really. You can get paid to make sand castles?" I think the same thing.

It's just crazy cool. — Sarah Sekula



**86%**  
**SAID OTHER  
PEOPLE ARE THE  
WORST THING  
ABOUT THE BEACH**



### FACEBOOK POLLS

When we can't have the beach to ourselves, that's a problem. Or is it? The second most common response to the worst thing about the beach was "nothing." In the words of reader Paula Case: "The worst part about the beach is going home."

**WHAT DO YOU  
LIKE MOST ABOUT  
CARIBBEAN  
ISLANDS?**

**66%**

**SAID THE BEACHES  
FOLLOWED BY  
THE LANDSCAPE (18%)**





## GUYANA

This is Sugar Beach Resort on St. Lucia. It's a black-sand beach. The white sand you see is imported 640 miles from Guyana. So is the sand at Buccament Bay on St. Vincent. Beautified beaches aren't new. Barbuda and Trinidad used to export their sand across the Caribbean. But it's a disputed practice, as it leaves donor coastlines vulnerable.

## WHAT IS SAND?



### rocks

Most of what comprises Caribbean beaches is what's detailed below. But black and brown grains of detrital sand (weathered rocks) are present on our favorite shores.



### parrotfish poop

When parrotfish eat algae off coral, they end up consuming coral too. The coral bits they "release" become sand. White sand. Each parrotfish poops out 200 pounds of it a year.



### shellfish and coral

The skeletal remains of coral and shellfish are why Caribbean beaches vary in color. The sand reflects the sea life around them. Unless, of course, the sand is from Guyana.



ZACH STOVALL; SIDEBAR: SHUTTERSTOCK (3)





BEST  
CARIBBEAN  
BEACHES

# WHERE IS **THIS** SAND FROM?

Not all sand attracts visitors equally. Some resorts, like this one, import their beach.





## BEST CARIBBEAN BEACHES

# HARDEST BEACHES TO GET TO

*Islands* staff photographer Zach Stovall once meandered around unexploded bombs to get to a beach on Culebra. He's climbed down a rope in Anguilla and hiked through briars on St. Martin. If he can see a beach on Google Maps, he'll find a way in. But the beach on the right? He's never been. "Saltwhistle Bay on Mayreau? I've had it on my wish list for a long time. But I haven't been able to get there."

### THE CHALLENGE

There's no airstrip on Mayreau. Nor is there a cruise port, a heli pad or an Avis counter. This is why Saltwhistle Bay will not be found on a crowd-sourced list of top 25 beaches. The only way here is with a friend — a good friend with a seaworthy boat.

### EXTRA INTRIGUE

The same goes for Saltwhistle's closest rivals in the Grenadines region (see map above). Petit Bateau in the Tobago Cays. Sandy Island near Bequia. Anse La Roche on Carriacou. The world's best hiking shoes will never get close to them.

### THE ANSWER

All leading to this: Staff photographers Jon Whittle and Lori Barbely are returning to these epic islands aboard the 236-foot schooner *Mandalay* in mid-October, and you can come too. Our cruise in May sold out, so consider this a second chance. The trip isn't all about beaches though. One lady on her 24th Grenadines cruise with Sail Windjammer admitted to the crew, "I hate beaches." But she obviously loves great journeys.

Be the first to book a cabin:  
[islands.com/ioa](http://islands.com/ioa)



Put your feet on this wish-list beach. Go to [islands.com/ioa](http://islands.com/ioa).

FROM LEFT: JON WHITTLE; MATT DUTILE; BRAIN: SHUTTERSTOCK





## PSYCHE OF THE BEACH

Why love a shoreline?

If you like this magazine, you like beach photos. But the reasons why go beyond imagining yourself in them. So claims Wallace J. Nichols, Ph.D., author of the best-selling book *Blue Mind*, which investigates the science behind why we feel happier and healthier by the sea.

**The images shown here do more than flood our minds with good memories.**

There's also the mammalian response; the signal of water suggesting everything is OK. There's water to drink. There's a view. You can see what's coming. You're safe. This all sounds intuitive, but when a photo hints of a safe place, the brain's chemical response — the release of dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin — is a big deal whether you're a fox or a human.

**I describe the blue mind as the mildly meditative state that occurs when you're near, in, on or under the water.** For most, a blue mind is a positive sensation, but a bad experience with water can spoil that.

**The red mind refers to stress or urgency, and it's needed for survival.**



This book's author wishes you water. His reasons are surprising. \$27, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



We need our heart rate to go up to focus. Long ago, when lions chased us, that was the case. Now, as we navigate complex problems, it's still a requirement. But an all-red mind causes the body to break down at a cellular level.

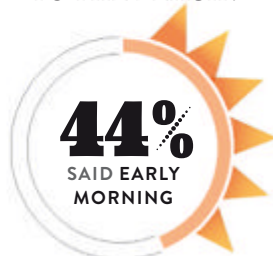
**It's not blue mind versus red mind.**

They're complementary. There's the amped-up approach to things (red) and the more creative thinking that occurs at a beach (blue). Our brains need both.

**Gray mind is the detached, indifferent perspective.** Keep this to a minimum. Most vacations leave the gray mind and red mind behind to experience that restorative quality that comes with being by water.

**The beach is a sweet spot.** It's where our bare feet contact the sand. This interaction, far removed from our workdays, signals freedom and safety. Water is nearby. We have the option to get wet. It's why most of us love beaches. — *as told to Eddy Patricelli*

FAVORITE TIME  
OF DAY TO GO  
TO THE BEACH?



### FACEBOOK POLLS

Some of your spellchecks must be defaulting to the word “nothing” (see poll note on page 47). It was the second most popular response to the question on the right, yet we sure do see a lot of vacant Caribbean beaches right around sunrise.

WHAT KEEPS YOU  
FROM GOING  
TO THE BEACH  
EARLIER?





# NEVIS

## FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Here's a Caribbean twist: Beautiful island, a cultish following, and visitors fresh off the ferry who don't run for the beach.

STORY BY DAVID LANSING

PHOTOS BY JON WHITTLE





Resorts on Nevis embrace their surroundings, both green (Golden Rock Inn, far left) and old (Montpelier Plantation).



**THIS ISN'T A TYPICAL ISLAND TOUR.** We're not heading for the beach. At least not yet. It's my first night on Nevis and Muffin Hoffman, who owns the Montpelier Plantation resort, set in the lush hills shadowed by Nevis Peak, is driving down a narrow moonlit road thick with vegetation on either side.

"Keep an eye out for donkeys," she says. "I hit one last week."

I cringe. "Was it harmed?"

"Oh, the donkey was fine, but it put a dent in my car." She chuckles. "There are donkeys all over. Lots of people on the island still ride them to work."

"No."

"Yes. You see, that's just old Caribbean."

I've heard this phrase — "old Caribbean" — hundreds of times across dozens of

islands, in all sorts of settings. Each time I wondered, just what is it? Stone ruins? An ancient rum distillery? A replica pirate ship on a cocktail cruise? I've done those cruises. But nowhere are the words "old Caribbean" more prevalent than on Nevis, an island of less than 36 square miles. Here donkeys dent cars. And for some, they *are* cars.

Earlier in the day, when my taxi driver, Herbert, picked me up from the ferry landing, he pointed out old concrete bus benches circled around a fire pit in Charlestown, population 1,500, the only town of any significance on the island.

"Right there is the place to get barbecued ribs on a Friday night," he told me.

I saw no signage, no cooking shed, no tables — just the fire pit and repurposed

concrete benches. So I asked Herbert what the name of the place was. He looked perplexed. "He just be da rib place." When I asked him how anyone could possibly know where to go when you said let's eat at some rib joint with no name, he said, "That be old Caribbean."

The next day, I'm wandering around Charlestown. I pass revelers dressed mostly in white, joyously laughing, singing, dancing as if it's carnival week.

"What are people celebrating?" I ask an old woman on the street.

"Be a funeral," she says. She sees my startled expression and laughs. "Oh, hon, dat just be old Caribbean style."

A few nights later, Muffin hosts a barbecue on the resort's private beach, 6 miles down the hill from Montpelier.

Nevis Peak and a silk cotton tree where Horatio Nelson married in 1787 qualify as Nevis high-rises. Muffin and Ziggy (the dog) love the view.





Here I am on a tiny Caribbean island, yet being at the beach seems novel. Nevis isn't exactly known for its beaches, though there are few (Oualie and Pinney's are a good start). But on this evening, the beach feels anachronistic, reminiscent of a time when colonialists would never consider donning bathing suits and getting wet.

Around me, wooden tables are lit with kerosene lanterns. A smartly dressed waitress offers glasses of pinot gris. Guests are freshly showered, women in little black dresses, men in crisp white shirts. No cans of Carib beer here, no bikini-clad limbo dancers or faux Marley bands.

The scene is such a throwback, I half expect novelist Graham Greene, wearing a white tropical suit, to wander out from the softly lit pavilion where Harry Belafonte

is singing "The Banana Boat Song."

A young couple from Florida, also staying at Montpelier, lounge on a white canvas couch in the pavilion, smiling. Their names are Kara and Erin and they are celebrating their wedding anniversary.

"We got married on this beach four years ago," says Kara. Her husband mentions this is their ninth vacation on Nevis. "Ninth?" I ask. That can't be right.

"Yes," says Kara. "Our friends always ask us about what we do when we're here. We tell them nothing. We like how quiet it is and how gentle the people are."

Muffin announces that dinner is ready and accompanies us to the barbecue island, encircled by tiki torches, where several women in chef's outfits fuss over chicken and ribs roasting on a wood fire.



#### IF YOU'RE CURIOUS

Nevis' main road is called ... the Main Road. The 21-mile-long circuit around the island takes an hour to drive. It was built by an Irish road gang on one side and a Taiwanese gang on the other. Locals still debate who did the better job. What isn't debatable is the best island drink: Ting with a Sting, made from local white rum and grapefruit soda.

#### IF YOU'RE SERIOUS

Getting to Nevis entails flying to nearby St. Kitts. Nonstop flights exist from Miami, Atlanta, New York and Charlotte. From St. Kitts, six ferries service Nevis. The ride is 45 minutes, and easy on the eyes.







## WHEN HE READS ABOUT EDEN IN THE BIBLE, HE IMAGINES IT MEANS NEVIS.

“What should I get?” I ask Angie, who’s tending to the meat.

“Ribs,” she whispers. I ask her if they’re better than the ribs at that place with no name in Charlestown.

“Oh, darlin’, how can you even ask me that? I slow cook mine first and then finish them on the fire. The meat just fall off the bone. That’s the old Caribbean way.”

I rejoin the young Florida couple,

telling them that this is the first time since I arrived that I’ve seen a beach. They tell me that the first thing they do when they arrive on the island is visit the old ficus tree at Montpelier and place their palms on the trunk.

“Pilar, the manager’s wife, told us the tree has a spiritual energy and you can feel it if you put your hands on it,” says Kara. “So that’s what we do. Don’t you think that qualifies as old Caribbean?”

I do.

They tell me that their other ritual is to drive to the Golden Rock Inn, halfway up Nevis Peak.

“We go to watch the monkeys and eat lobster sandwiches,” says Kara, who invites me to join them the next day.

The Golden Rock Inn, like Montpelier

Plantation, is another old sugar plantation turned resort. It’s all giant palms and old mango trees, lily ponds and limpid pools surrounding mossy stone outbuildings accented with peppery red doors and Kelly green chairs.

Sure enough, the green vervet monkeys, first brought to the island as pets in the 17th or 18th century, are everywhere around Golden Rock. Gorging on mangoes in trees near the junglelike gardens, they do not disappoint. Neither do the lobster sandwiches.

We dine alfresco on a patio paved with lava stone repurposed from the old sugar mill. Dragonflies buzz, mourning doves coo, monkeys holler.

“I’d be happy sitting in this chair for an entire afternoon doing nothing more than





The Golden Rock Inn's lush 100-acre property is a seven-minute walk from the nearest beach. Its guests include green vervet monkeys.

a deep breath of fragrant, musty air.  
Me too.

On my last day, Herbert offers to drive me to St. James Anglican Church in Hicks Village. The church is famous for its statue of a black Jesus, one of three in the Caribbean. Herbert assures me the gospel choir there is the best on the island, though he admits to being a little partial (this is his parish church).

I ask Herbert as we drive if he's ever been off the island. "No, sir," he says. I ask him why not. "Be a naughty boy," he says. "If he leave, maybe they not let him back."

See, Herbert knows the Bible inside and out. His favorite part is the Book of Genesis. When he reads about the Garden of Eden with all its lush vegetation and wild fruit just falling off the trees, he

imagines it must be talking about Nevis.

"Because," he says, "that's just what it's like here." And like Adam, Herbert has on occasion nibbled on forbidden fruit. But unlike Adam, Herbert has no intention of getting kicked out of paradise. Ever. That's why he's never been off the island.

Back at Montpelier, I pack my things during a five-minute deluge that makes the air smell grassy and brings out bright green frogs the size of salad plates from their hiding places in the lush gardens.

Herbert and Muffin wait for me at the front gate. Heading down the mountain, I ask Muffin what, exactly, old Caribbean means to her. She thinks for a moment.

"Hard to explain. It's just something you feel here that you don't feel elsewhere in the West Indies."

So before I depart from Nevis, here's what I think "old Caribbean" means. It means people who still do things — like riding their donkeys to work — the way their daddy did and their granddaddy before him. It means living in a place with no traffic lights but "Monkey Xing" signs. It means goat herds and scurrying chickens in dusty streets lined with wooden houses painted candy colors. It means an island of five parishes with over 50 churches, including a 17th-century stone edifice with a black Jesus over the altar, where a local choir sings old gospel songs accompanied by an energetic elderly woman playing an organ, bouncing on its bench as if she's being stung by hornets.

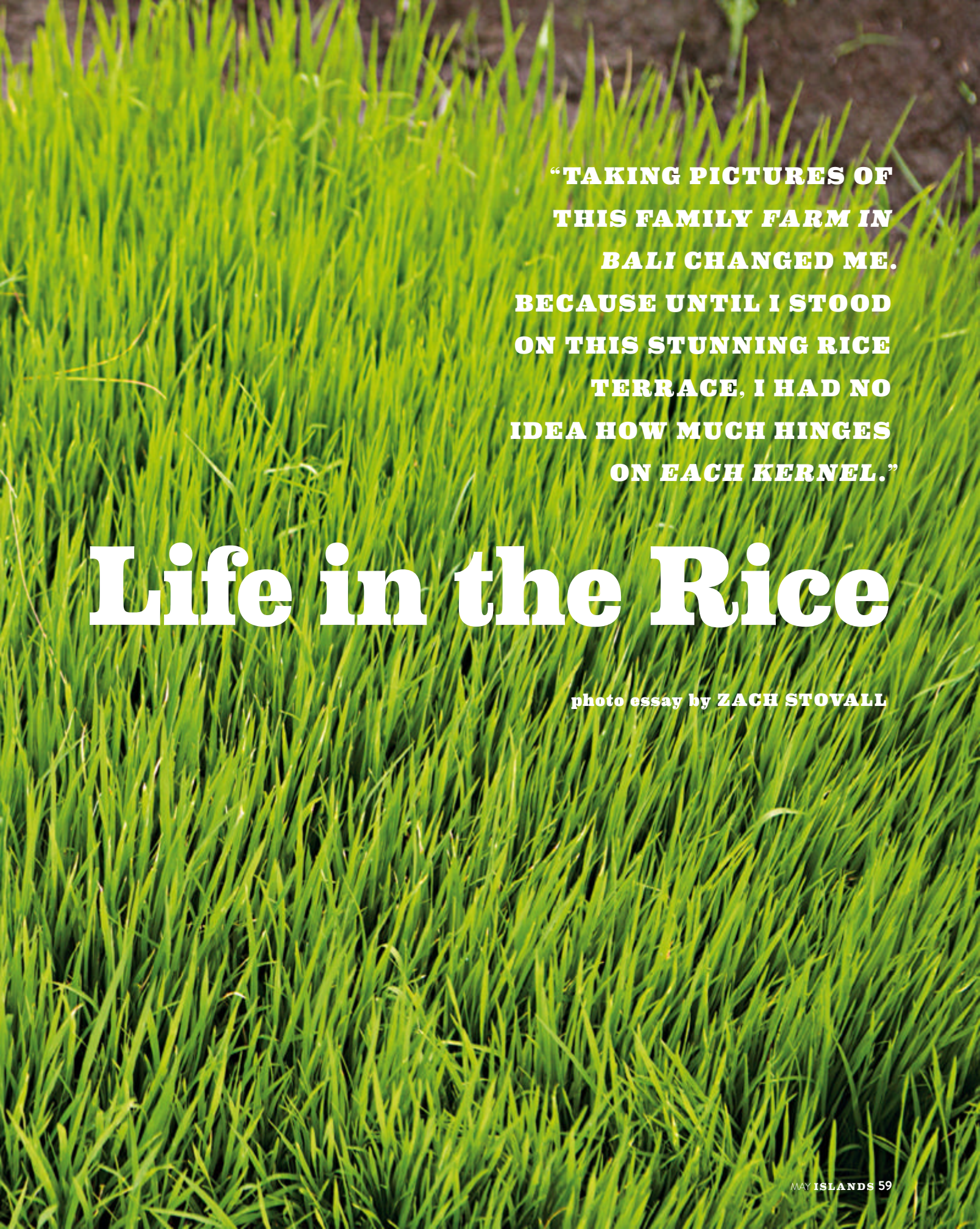
That's old Caribbean.

 **MOVE TO NEVIS:** [islands.com/bitlo](https://islands.com/bitlo)









**“TAKING PICTURES OF  
THIS FAMILY FARM IN  
BALI CHANGED ME.  
BECAUSE UNTIL I STOOD  
ON THIS STUNNING RICE  
TERRACE, I HAD NO  
IDEA HOW MUCH HINGES  
ON EACH KERNEL.”**

# **Life in the Rice**

**photo essay by ZACH STOVALL**





## The Family

In Bali, no meal is complete without rice — no meal. The weight of that fact hits me when I step into a paddy with Ni Wayan Punduh, a woman small in stature and with eyes that provide a picture-window view deep into her core. She waves me toward the Sidemen rice terrace where her 15-year-old grandson, Gede, is buried to his calves in a mud slurry, as thick and brown as Thanksgiving gravy. At least half the people in this region sustain themselves by farming — for food and trade. Nearby is Ni's husband, Wayan Punduh, whose thin frame is bent at the waist. They'll work until their lower backs burn, and then they'll work more. During a break I follow Wayan up to the home where he and Ni live with nine children and grandchildren and seven chickens. To get there we climb four tiers of slick terrace, leaving me to wonder how the family cow gets into and out of the field. Inside the home, I immediately notice the largest item on a simple table: a rice bowl. The majority of what the family harvests will end up in the bowl, and they will have worked for every grain.













## The Work

I'm invited back to the field for breakfast the next morning. Mud oozes between my toes and eventually buries my ankles as the rising sun shines through mist. Ni shows up with a banana leaf piled with plain rice and one finger-size strip of fish. She and Wayan eat like this in the terrace, squatting instead of sitting in the mud. Wayan uses his fingers to shovel the morning starch into his mouth, and I follow suit. Then I listen. The sounds of running water — tiny waterfalls cascading down the terrace tiers — are the only ambient noise. When we finish eating, Ni digs up young shoots of rice with her fingers and bundles them for Wayan. The routines haven't changed over the years. As his father did 50 years ago, Wayan will use the cow to plow the terrace. Everything else is done by hand. One by one, he and the kids push those little rice shoots into the mud, until the plot is covered in glowing green rows.



**IF YOU'RE CURIOUS** On average, people in Indonesia consume a whopping 306 pounds of rice per person each year. So although the nation is the world's third largest producer of rice, much of it stays right here. Rice is so important that it's used in most daily offerings to the Hindu deities.

**IF YOU'RE SERIOUS** Nineteen hours of flying connects Los Angeles with Bali via Hong Kong. Rent a car and drive one hour to Sidemen. Darmada is a boutique hotel in the middle of the terraces with a spring-fed pool and stylish open-air bathrooms overlooking the Unda river. Go to [darmadabali.com](http://darmadabali.com).



## The Payoff

With the terrace so wet and slick, walking is precarious. Making my way up a 4-foot tier, I slip and land butt first, sending a wave of mud into one of the little waterfalls. Ni giggles as she fixes the damaged irrigation, saying the only English word she knows: "slow." Each waterfall is just a trickle, maybe 6 inches wide, but every one is vital in the water delivery system called a *subak*. Water originates atop the volcano, Mount Agung, and flows down through a network of canals, aqueducts and tunnels, supplying the valley's farmers with clean, happy water. Rice is considered a gift from the gods, and a happy god gives happy water, which yields ample rice. At night the Punduh's gather and laugh even though their backs ache. That they can have a harmonious relationship with each other and with nature under these conditions is remarkable. I ask Wayan what he would do if he suddenly came into a lot of money. He thinks and says, "Buy another cow." Behind him, everyone laughs. It is one of the happiest families I've ever met, brought together by the rice.











# FREE TRAVEL INFORMATION!

Free brochures, catalogs and other advertiser information. Simply mail the attached Reader Response Card, FAX toll-free to 888.847.6035, or visit [islands.com/freeinfo](http://islands.com/freeinfo) for direct access to each Advertiser's website and free information.

## CARIBBEAN & BAHAMAS

1. **Baha Mar** - Introducing a glamorous new playground with the world's most celebrated hotels in Nassau, The Bahamas. [PAGE 29](#)
2. **Bahamas Out Islands Promotion Board** - Bahamas [PAGE 26](#)
3. **Bimini Big Game Club** - Bahamas - [PAGE 26](#)
4. **Blue Residences** - Spectacular ocean views, featuring fully equipped apartment suites and a great variety of resort amenities and services. [PAGE 8](#)
5. **British Virgin Islands** - Nature's Little Secrets. Over 60 pristine, beautiful islands. A Mecca for watersports, world class resorts and intimate hideaways. [PAGE 7](#)
6. **Cayman Islands Department of Tourism** - Experience Caymankind, everything and everyone that makes a Cayman Islands vacation so unique. [PAGE 4-5](#)
7. **Elite Island Resorts** - St. James's Club Resort & Villas and The Verandah Resort & Spa - Two stunning all-inclusive beachfront resorts in Antigua, perfect for destination weddings and honeymoons, family vacations, or spa getaways. [PAGE 10-11](#)

8. **Fernandez Bay Village** Bahamas - [PAGE 26](#)
9. **Hilton Hotels & Resort in Puerto Rico** - Puerto Rico Hiltons offer fun in every flavor, from resort casinos to secluded island retreats. [PAGE 13](#)
10. **Ocean Club Resorts** - Our guests say of all the things to do here - tennis, water sports and nearby golf - their favorite is doing nothing at all. [PAGE 31](#)
11. **Pigeon Cay Beach Club** Bahamas - [PAGE 26](#)
12. **Puerto Rico Tourism Company** - Beautiful beaches, a tropical rain forest and a bio-luminescent bay. Puerto Rico: Perfect get-away. [PAGE 9](#)
13. **Royal West Indies** - Turks & Caicos - A luxurious beachfront hotel resort nestled on the shores of world famous Grace Bay Beach in the Turks and Caicos Islands. [PAGE 14](#)
14. **Secrets Resorts & Spa** Unlimited Luxury. A new and better way for adults to have it all. [PAGE 15](#)
15. **Staniel Cay Yacht Club** Bahamas - [PAGE 26](#)
16. **Stella Maris Resort Club** Bahamas - [PAGE 26](#)

17. **The Sands at Grace Bay** - Turks & Caicos - Spacious, beautifully appointed suites, real vacation living on Grace Bay Beach. [PAGE 23](#)
18. **Tiamo Resort** Bahamas - [PAGE 26](#)
19. **Treasure Cay Beach** Bahamas - [PAGE 26](#)
20. **Valentine's Resort & Marina** Bahamas - [PAGE 26](#)

## FLORIDA

21. **Little Palm Island Resort & Spa** - Exclusive Private Island resort. The Florida Keys most romantic weddings and honeymoon destination. [PAGE 75](#)

## HAWAII

22. **Aston Hotels & Resorts** - 26 hotels and resorts on 4 Hawaiian Islands to fit any lifestyle, taste or budget. [PAGE 33](#)
23. **Makena Beach & Golf Resort** - Make it The Makena Resort for your Maui vacation. Affordable packages & promotions. [PAGE 35](#)

## MEXICO

24. **Palace Resorts** - Offering all-inclusive resorts in Mexico. [PAGE 21](#)
25. **Palladium Hotels & Resorts** - Five-Star all-inclusive accommodations on some of the world's finest beaches. Perfect for a honeymoon or family vacation. [PAGE 76](#)

## MISCELLANEOUS

26. **Caravan Tours** - These quality tours feature complete sightseeing, professional Tour Directors and great itineraries, operated by one of the country's oldest and most respected guided tour companies. [PAGE 70](#)
27. **Thrifty Car Rental** - Get out and have some fun! [PAGE 19](#)

## MULTIPLE ISLANDS

28. **Grand Sirenis Hotels & Resorts** - Escape this summer to Sirenis Hotels & Resorts! [PAGE 25](#)
29. **Sandals Resorts** - Jamaica, Antigua, St. Lucia & the Bahamas - Voted the world's best all-inclusive resorts for over a decade. [PAGE 2-3](#)

## VACATION RENTALS

30. **Antigua Village Beach Resort** - Antigua - [PAGE 71](#)
31. **Catered to Vacation** - Saint John, USVI - [PAGE 70](#)
32. **Cayo Espanto** - Belize [PAGE 71](#)
33. **Coral Beach Club** - Saint Martin - [PAGE 71](#)
34. **Villa Sirenetta** - Tortola, BVI [PAGE 71](#)





# HOW TO

## CATCH A FISH

WITH NO REELS AND NO LIMIT, THESE LOCALS GET CREATIVE.

### 1 PIRANHAS COAT HANGER

I slip chicken bits onto my piranha line — a straightened coat hanger. I'm in a canoe off an Amazonian island in Brazil. My guide says we can try nets, but the fanged fish often shear through them. Seconds later I jerk the wire and a piranha glares at me. "What now?" I plead. My guide laughs. Hooking a piranha is the easy part. As for their taste: think bony sardine. — *Jad Davenport*

### 2 CITY SHRIMP SWIM POOL

In Kaohsiung, Taiwan, everyone loves shrimp. And fishing. Kinda. Poured concrete under a tin roof. Plastic chairs and Taiwanese Muzak. One man dumps buckets of live shrimp into the pool while everyone else pays \$10 an hour to fish them out. The price is the same no matter how many you catch, and includes a pole, bait (tinier shrimp) and a grill to cook 'em. — *Nathan Myers*

### 3 MINNOWS CAR BATTERY

He's waist deep in a Philippines river with a car battery strapped to his back, a salad bowl on his chest and two ski poles wired to the juice. He's smoking, of course. He wades around and when he sees a fish, lunges toward it with his electrified poles. The fish yelps from the water and lands in the man's bowl. Half-cooked already. Cigarette ash flutters into the bowl. The man continues. — *NM*

### SAVE LOTS OF FISH

#### TASTY TROUBLE

You know the loser sign you make with one hand to your forehead? Well, underwater it means you're a winner. As in you've spotted a lionfish, an attractive creature with venomous spikes and a Godzilla-size appetite.

Problem is, it's not from these parts. "They eat everything and reproduce like rabbits," says Bas Noji, our divemaster. He mentions that a single female lays 2 million eggs a year, and that the fish has no enemies here in the Caribbean. Well, except for Bas, and others like him who see this invasive species as a major threat to the marine ecosystem.

Minutes later, we flipper-kick our way among Bonaire's coral gardens. Hovering over a reef, I spot one of the buggers under a ledge. I make the loser sign. Bas aims his spear gun and fires.

Over the next half-hour we spear 10 and keep three.

Topside, Bas carefully removes the lethal spines with a rusty knife. He rubs away the scales with a piece of dried coral. "I've seen big guys cry after being stung. It feels like being hit with a hammer, hard. Over and over."

Next, we make our way to The Beach Hut, where our catch is lightly grilled.

"We eat lionfish every week," he says. "My daughter's first word was 'daddy,' second was 'mommy,' third was 'lionfish.'" I know why. It's darn delicious. — *Sarah Sekula*



It's believed lionfish first entered the Atlantic during Hurricane Andrew in 1992, when six of them escaped from an aquarium.



## LIVE ON

## THE OTHER SAN JUAN

BEST FOR: LOVERS OF THE UNPREDICTABLE OUTDOORS

**It was a group of nuns that made me fall for** San Juan Island in Washington state. And some llamas. At the time, I was graduating from Boston University and looking for a photojournalism dissertation subject. Google led me to a small monastery out here. It looked unusual enough for my project. That first summer I lived in a barn, peed in the woods, and watched those nuns in full habit mix animal husbandry with Gregorian chants. The dissertation didn't work out, but my move became permanent. **DAILY SNAPSHOT** The mood and tempo of the day depend largely on the season. Summer brings tourists, lively mornings and long days working in my friend's bakery. Privacy? That's what winter is for, with quiet morning hikes on empty trails and afternoon picnics in the rain (you get used to it). But some things do not change with the seasons. A deer often wipes its nose against our cabin

window to wake us up. The morning light falls on ruby-red madrone trees. We take the scenic route to work, which also happens to be the only route to work: the west side road, famous for its views of the Haro Strait and the distant Olympic Peninsula. You can't travel this road from spring to fall without seeing orca whales, porpoises and, on really good days, a humpback. **MOVER BEWARE** Bring the slightest hint of mainland expectation and you'll be the subject of gossip from the pub to the San Juan Island Food Co-op. Island time is as true here as it is anywhere else. Yes, we move slowly. People who complain about it, well, everyone knows who they are (can you tell I've been part of those discussions?). Oh, and get used to the only kind of party you'll ever attend on this island: the potluck. Don't think it's an invitation to complain about the gasoline prices. They're really high here. We already know. — J.K. Fox

Getting here is by ferry or seaplane. Staying here requires a good set of bicycle wheels.



San Juan Islands

WASHINGTON



EMILY TRUJILLO AND  
KYLE NICHOLSON  
**YEARS ON ISLAND**  
5

**OCCUPATION**  
Restaurant owners

**OUR 3 CENTS**

**1. Tourists treat us like unicorns; they think we're these strange creatures to be living on an island. Life is much the same, but with more deer.**

**2. Our best food comes from sister islands that are really remote, like the produce from Waldron, which has no paved roads.**

**3. Living on a small island changes your attitude about distance. A drive longer than 10 minutes is a long commute to us.**

**TO BUY OR TO TRY**

THE MEDIAN HOME PRICE IS \$430,000, DEPENDING ON VIEWS AND PROXIMITY TO WATER. VACATION RENTALS FLUCTUATE WITH SEASONS, FROM \$130 TO \$300 A NIGHT.

**BEST ISLANDS FOR BIKE-SHOP BUSINESSES: MAUI, SEYCHELLES, ST. CROIX, CAYE CAULKER (BELIZE)**



# Photo Contest

ENTER BEFORE  
**APRIL 15**  
ISLANDS.COM/  
FACEBOOK



## TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT. WIN YOUR DREAM TRIP.

GO TO: [ISLANDS.COM/FACEBOOK](http://ISLANDS.COM/FACEBOOK)

### 1 TRIP FOR TWO TO WAIKIKI

Grand prize: flights and a four-night stay for two in an ocean-view hotel room at Aston Waikiki Beach Hotel (across the street from world-famous Waikiki Beach). Two round-trip tickets provided by Alaska Airlines. [astonwaikikibeach.com](http://astonwaikikibeach.com); [alaskaair.com](http://alaskaair.com)

### 2 LITTLE PALM ISLAND

Three-night stay in an Island Romance suite at Little Palm Island, the most secluded retreat in the Florida Keys. The stay includes a waterfront breakfast each morning. It's so far from the crowds that presidents and celebrities escape here. [littlepalmisland.com](http://littlepalmisland.com)

### 3 VILLA STAY ON ANTIGUA

A four-night all-inclusive stay at St. James's Club Resort & Villas on the tropical island of Antigua. Located on a remote peninsula in the Caribbean Sea, the resort offers guests two amazing private beaches and six swimming pools. [stjamesclubantigua.com](http://stjamesclubantigua.com)

### AM PHOTO WORKSHOP IN MAINE

The Artistic Merit winner will receive tuition for one week at Maine Media Workshops in charming Rockport, Maine. Learn how to take better photos with this hands-on photography program. [mainemedia.edu](http://mainemedia.edu)

#### PREMIER PARTNERS







**Peggy's Cove**

## Nova Scotia

10-Day Tour **\$1395**  
with Prince Edward Island

**Caravan makes it easy and affordable** for you to visit Canada's Atlantic Coast. Enjoy Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island—*Your year to go!*

**Affordable Guided Vacations** + tax, fees

Guatemala & Tikal Ruins	10 days	\$1295
Costa Rica	9 days	\$1095
Panama Tour & Canal	8 days	\$1195
<b>Nova Scotia &amp; P.E.I.</b>	<b>10 days</b>	<b>\$1395</b>
Canadian Rockies	9 days	\$1595
Grand Canyon & Zion	8 days	\$1395
California Coast	8 days	\$1295
Mount Rushmore	8 days	\$1295
New England & Foliage	8 days	\$1295

**“Brilliant, Affordable Pricing”**  
—Arthur Frommer, Travel Editor

**Free 28-Page Brochure**

Caravan.com 1-800-Caravan



# caravan

**Guided Vacations Since 1952**



ST. JOHN, USVI

**CATERED TO VACATION HOMES**

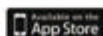
Vacation villas of St. John, USVI. Your on-island experts since 1989.  
Whatever your holiday desires, we cater to you. **cateredto.com**



## Our App has a **NEW LOOK!**

The digital version of *ISLANDS* is available in the App Store.

**Save 62%**  
when you purchase a  
one year subscription.



Apple, the Apple Logo, and iTunes are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. iPad is a trademark of Apple Inc. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

# Best Islands to Live on

Quit your job. Move to an island. Be happy.

We show you how on [islands.com/BITLO](http://islands.com/BITLO).



## ANTIGUA



**ANTIGUA VILLAGE** Personally styled, luxury beachfront villas and condos set in lush tropical gardens on one of the most beautiful and famous beaches on Antigua. [antiguavillage.net](http://antiguavillage.net)

## BELIZE

**CAYO ESPANTO – A PRIVATE ISLAND**

Our five-star, world-class Belize resort is for the discriminating few who demand the best life has to offer. **888-666-4282 • [apivateisland.com](http://apivateisland.com)**

## TORTOLA



**VILLA SIRENETTA** Luxury 3 bdrm villa perched above Smuggler's Cove & Long Bay Beach. Exceptional views, private pool, fully a/c. From \$2,500/wk. **609-529-2988 • [villasirenetta.com](http://villasirenetta.com)**

## ST. MARTIN/ST. MAARTEN

**CORAL BEACH CLUB**

The art of luxury beachfront living with the amenities of a boutique resort! Contact us about Specials! **866-978-7278 • [coralbeach-club.com](http://coralbeach-club.com)**



FEATURED PARTNER



## CASTAWAYS TRAVEL

Join us May 2-9, 2015 for a new adventure in an upscale adult, all-inclusive, clothing optional resort. Near Cancun is Hidden Beach, the most luxurious, clothing optional five-star boutique resort anywhere. Castaways Travel helped pioneer the development of this luxury, 42-suite resort, dedicated to folks who enjoy sunning and socializing in an adult atmosphere. Celebrate the 13th anniversary with us in May. For free airport transfers plus a \$100/reservation credit for 5 nights or more call 1-800-470-2020 and mention this ISLANDS MAGAZINE promotion.

**HiddenBeach.net • 800 470 2020**



### ISLAND COLLECTION FURNITURE

Create your own private paradise. We are a full line of hand carved, hand finished teak furniture made to your specifications. Each piece is architecturally drawn and designed by owner, Phil Carpenter. (407) 230-1186

**islandcollection.com**



### KOKOMO - ELEUTHERA BAHAMAS

Sprawling 3 bdrm home on pink sand beach. A/C, generator, Wi-Fi, phone, TV, pool table, huge decks, grill, hammocks, kayaks, and bicycles. \$1,795-\$2,395/wk. Call (800) 454-2299 or (239) 732-5112

**kokomo1.com**



### PARADISE VILLAS, LITTLE CAYMAN

Little Cayman's all oceanfront resort. 12 one bedroom villas, seaside dining at the Hungry Iguana, and world class diving at Bloody Bay. Email iggy@candw.ky

**paradisevillas.com**

**EL Canario  
Lagoon  
Hotel**

### EL CANARIO

"The Place to Stay" in San Juan, PR. Moderately priced newly remodeled rooms w/ flat screen TV's and free WiFi. Walk to the beach, casinos, and nightlife. (800) 533-2649

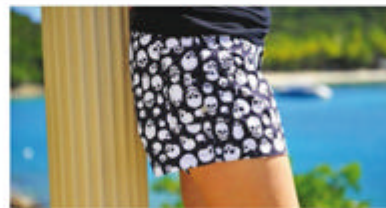
**canariohotels.com**



### DAVID P. VIRTUE

Express your passion & lifestyle with a hand-crafted band, available in 14K & 18K gold and platinum. Created in NH using 100% recycled gold and platinum. Full money back guarantee.

**DavidVirtue.com**



### BOARDSHORTSWORLD.COM

The world's largest selection of board shorts & board skirts. Now available in any length you want. Hand crafted in the USA.

**BoardShortsWorld.com**



### INTERACTIVE JEWELRY BY KINEKT

Tug on your heartstrings with the Gear Necklace, and spin in style with the Gear Ring. Lifetime warranty. Free shipping. (888) 600-8494.

**kinektdesign.com**



### CONDO FOR SALE ON ST. MAARTEN

Beautiful condo in Lighthouse. Three bedrooms, three baths, 2,400 square feet, and part of the Oyster Bay Beach Resort on Dutch side. Spectacular views. \$895,000. (484) 459-0790

**vbpro.com listing #270897**





#### ST. CROIX, SHOYS BEACH

Lovely 3 bedroom villa with a large pool and deck, gorgeous views, and steps from swimming, snorkeling, and golf. From \$1,600/week, call (508) 785-9895.

[shoysparadisefound.com](http://shoysparadisefound.com)



#### MAUI BEACHFRONT CONDOMINIUM

Watch the humpback whales from your private lanai, sleep to the sounds of the surf fifteen steps away. Come listen! \$129 per night. (800) 742-7955

[mauikondo.com](http://mauikondo.com)



#### THE CLUB AT LITTLE CAYMAN

The Club at Little Cayman, renowned for its carefree luxury lifestyle consists of eight units in either two or three bedroom floor plans. (800) 327-3835

[theclubatlittlecayman.com](http://theclubatlittlecayman.com)



### FERNANDEZ BAY VILLAGE

Discover the breathtaking beauty and relaxed atmosphere of Fernandez Bay Village. Sandy beaches, sixteen oceanfront villas and cottages, calm clear blue water, low key, fabulous food, honor tiki bar, clubhouse with outside dining, free Wi-Fi, boutique, hammocks, kayaks, boats, paddle boards, fishing, stunning sunsets, evening bonfire, friendly faces, and engaging staff. The Bay's natural setting and spacious area provides a sense of privacy hard to find today. Welcome to our island community, your home away from home, Fernandez Bay Village.

[fernandezbayvillage.com](http://fernandezbayvillage.com) • (800) 940-1905

# SAVE TIME

## 24/7 CUSTOMER SERVICE

### is only a click away!

- Change Your Address
- Check Your Account Status
- Renew, Give a Gift or Pay a Bill
- Replace Missing Issues



## Islands

Just log on to: [www.islands.com/cs](http://www.islands.com/cs)

To participate in the  
**Travel Partners** section,  
contact

**Jacki Kendall**

[jacki.kendall@bonniercorp.com](mailto:jacki.kendall@bonniercorp.com)





## WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT ...

### *Manicou River Resort, Dominica*

#### **OPEN-AIR PRIVACY**

No chance anyone finds this spot by accident. You'll need a 4x4 to get up the steep mountain road. Hand-built wooden cottages open to the elements, peeking out from the jungle as glowing fireflies pass by to say hello. Sleep in the trees to the sound of the rain.

**MOST SURPRISING  
HAND-BLOWN  
GLASS SINKS. YOUR  
OWN PRIVATE TREE-  
HOUSE. A CHEF'S  
KITCHEN. THIS IS  
NOT YOUR TYPICAL  
ALL-INCLUSIVE.**

#### **OFF THE GRID**

Rainwater takes care of the plumbing, and electricity is solar-powered. There's Wi-Fi but only if you request it. Which you shouldn't. That place you dreamed of in winter? You're finally here. Count the stars. Find the swimming holes. Be present. From \$165. [manicouriver.com](http://manicouriver.com)

STORY AND PHOTO BY JEN JUDGE

ISLANDS, VOL. 35, NO. 3, APRIL/MAY 2015 (ISSN 0745-7847), is published 8 times a year (Jan./Feb., March, April/May, June, July/Aug., Sept./Oct., Nov., Dec.) by Bonnier Corporation, P.O. Box 8500, Winter Park, FL 32790; 407-628-4802. One year (8 issues) \$24 in the U.S. For Canada, add \$9 for postage per year. All other countries add \$18. Copyright © 2015 by Bonnier Corporation. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the written consent of Bonnier Corporation. Periodicals postage paid at Winter Park, FL, and at additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ISLANDS, P.O. Box 6364, Harlan, IA 51593. Printed in USA. PUBLICATION MAIL AGREEMENT NUMBER 40612608 CANADA RETURN MAIL: IMEX, P.O. Box 25542, London, Ontario N6C 6B2



LITTLE PALM ISLAND RESORT & SPA

*Little Torch Key, Florida*

littlepalmisland.com | 800.3.6ET.LOST

# ESCAPE

Two distinct island destinations to lose yourself in.

oceankey.com | 800.328.9815

OCEAN KEY RESORT & SPA

*Key West, Florida*



**N<sup>o</sup>BLE HOUSE**  
noblehousehotels.com





THE FREEDOM TO  
**PLAY YOUR WAY**

Discover all-inclusive Palladium Hotels & Resorts, kids clubs, a variety of a la carte gourmet restaurants, nightly live entertainment, fabulous beach locations and much more. We ensure our guests experience the vacation of a lifetime.

*Feel Free – It's included*

[www.palladiumhotelgroup.com](http://www.palladiumhotelgroup.com)

 /PalladiumHotelGroup

 @PalladiumHG

SPAIN | ITALY | MEXICO | DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | JAMAICA | BRAZIL